

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN SOCC

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

S O C C E R

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GOODBYE 1997...



...HELLO 1998

Editorial

By Micky Brock

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year, but now the season of glad tidings is over, let's get back to the nitty gritty that is football and why, perhaps, we are so attached to this glorious game.

Many so-called 'experts', who have no affiliation to the sport that conquers all before it, have tried to explain the devotion of the supporters for teams all over the world. They may have a paper from some university or other that states they are a 'psychologist' or some such thing, but without knowing your subject, living it, breathing it and following it, they often miss out on the fundamentals.

Soccer is a sport like no other. The beauty of football is that anyone can play, at any time and anywhere — many of us learning the basic skills with coats used as goalposts and as many a side as turned up, including the odd parent too.

For those who follow any form of Rugby, Cricket or AFL, you cannot practice much of their required skills alone, in soccer you can.

You can try to bend the ball from a free-kick situation, you can play 'keep up' alone, dribble around objects such as trees, cones, bricks or whatever. You cannot play Rugby, AFL or Cricket by yourself.

That brings a final, but no less important, factor to bear on the argument:

How many of those who watch these other sports, even on a regular basis, actually play it?

How many people rise on a Sunday morning, usually after a late, late night, and go out and play League or Union etc? Put that number to those who turn out for soccer, under any conditions, anywhere in the world.

The fact is, SOCCER IS GLOBAL, the others are not.

I feel the sums would certainly favour soccer fans in this regard. So why is soccer the popular addiction it is?

Soccer is a simple game, played simply. In its basic form it is a thing of great beauty, and not a sport, like basketball for instance, which requires a certain physical size. Soccer players can be all sizes and shapes.

It's an easy game, it can be played alone, but not even that takes into account the loyalty of soccer fans for their teams.

No other sport can command such a high regard and loyalty from its fans. It's not just a case of following a shirt or a colour. It is about following YOUR team, a team you've grown up with, a team you feel you belong to, own in some way.

When another sport comes along that commands so much of anyone's time, to the extent whereby you actually plan your weeks around the fixture list, let me know... trouble is, you might need to go through a Medium to do it!

CLUB NEWS EXTRA

BRANKO SIGNS STRIKER

By Nick Guoth

Canberra Cosmos have signed the much travelled Tristram Morgan to their squad. Morgan is a forward and it is hoped that he will help the team to score more than one goal per match.

Following two stints in Hong Kong with Kitchee and Kui-Tan, Morgan has played on and off with Perth Premier League team Western Knights. Last year he was also playing with Negri Sembilan in the Malaysian league, where he scored an even dozen goals.

He stated that he was keen to play for Perth but, owing to squad size, he wasn't given a chance to show himself but remains happy that Cosmos coach Branko Culina is providing the chance.

"I hope to be able to come in and score few goals and help boost both the morale of the team and its position on the Ericsson Cup table. If I'm not scoring, I'll be busy up front setting up goals," he said.



Branko Culina: Giving Morgan a chance.

Frank Martin.

"It allows us to develop specific games in the calendar and add that extra bit of interest for the fans."



RESTRUCTURE FOR COSMOS

Soccer Canberra President Steve Doszpot has announced the restructure of the Novell Canberra Cosmos. The new entity is 53% owned by Soccer Canberra (the ACT Soccer Federation), with the remainder of the shares allotted equally between Belconnen, Canberra City and Canberra Deakin Soccer clubs.

Soccer Canberra has appointed four members to the board of Cosmos, including new chairman Mr Ian Knop, and the head of the Canberra Institute of Technology, Mr Peter Veenker. Each of the three clubs will also have a representative on the board.

Mr Knop, commenting on the changes, said: "I am pleased at the show of confidence by Soccer Canberra in the Novell Canberra Cosmos. This restructure will now allow the new board to get on with the job of revitalising the club off the field."

The Cosmos have yet to register a win against any Sydney club in nearly three seasons in the competition - and now they have even more incentive.

PERTH NEWS



In other news, from our IWA correspondent Richard Kreider, Doug Ithier, Glory's 23-year old defender, has asked for a transfer.

After making just three appearances this season, all from off the bench, he has requested a release from the club due to lack of opportunities.

LOZANOVSKI FOR ROOS?

By Dwyght Tuffnell

South Melbourne coach Sange Postecoglou has backed Goran Lozanovski to be included in the Socceroo squad for the four nations tournament in February.

Postecoglou has been impressed with Lozanovski's form since coming back from an injury sustained in round one against Brisbane Strikers.

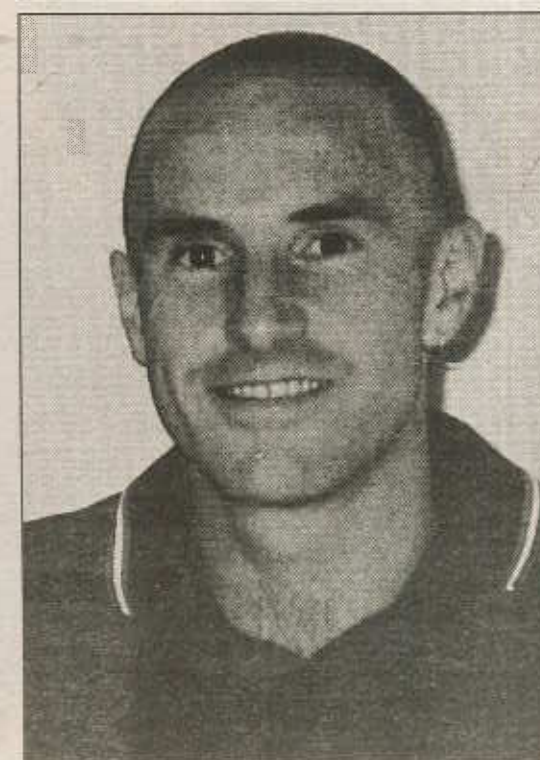
"I'd definitely like to see him getting that opportunity. He's been doing very well for us in the last couple of weeks," said Postecoglou.



Damian Mori: Scored his 100th goal.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Damian Mori on scoring his 100th NSL goal, and to Robbie Hooker for completing his 302nd NSL game.



Robbie Hooker: Over 300 NSL Games.

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GOOD OIL GOOD OIL GOOD OIL GOOD OIL

BY JOHN ECONOMOS

GARY MAROCCHI, former international and now the studious coach of high flying Perth Glory, was again amazed last Sunday night by the fabulous exhibition from Sydney United's veteran centre-back Velimir Kupresak.

"Last week he gave a great exhibition against us in Perth where his defensive work was so solid.

"His competitiveness is so infectious that he inspires players all around him. Now tonight he's at it again. Unbelievable player.

"I wish I had three or four Kupresaks in my team. Who wouldn't?"

On September 1, Mr Kupresak turns 35 and today is playing better Soccer than ever in his career.

■ ■ ■

ZORAN MATIC, Marconi's tough taskmaster, is most concerned that he could be without his pacey striker Sean Babic for Saturday night's big clash with Sydney Olympic.

Sydney Olympic, who played last night (Monday) away to Canberra has no such problem.

The explosive paced Babic was brought down from behind with a wild tackle last Friday night in Marconi's away battle with Newcastle.

He had to be stretched off the pitch with a badly swollen ankle that could see him out of action for a week.

■ ■ ■

DAVID MITCHELL, in his first full season as coach, felt like a juggler at a circus during the clash against Perth Glory last Sunday night at the Parramatta Stadium.

With so many of his players out of action, (himself included), through injuries or suspension, 'Big Mitch' had to patch up a makeshift line-up to take the field.

With so many changes, a disjointed United were understandably far from fluent in attack.

Mitch quickly once again during the second half had to juggle around his side with subs and positional changes to right the 'United Ship' and get it back on course.

■ ■ ■

KOSTAS SALAPASIDIS, Adelaide City's World Youth Championship striker, is off to Italy for trials with Torino.

For years Torino has consistently had one of the best youth development programs in all of Europe.

Salapasis made world headlines in Malaysia during the last World Youth tournament when he hit no less than four fabulous goals against World Champions Argentina to sink the famous 'Blue and Blacks'.



Gary Marocchi: Perth Glory's coach salutes Velimir Kupresak.



Sean Babic: Marconi's pacey striker in doubt for Olympic clash.



David Mitchell: Sydney United's champion player-coach.



Velimir Kupresak: United's outstanding centre-back.

But within the next four weeks another Australian young striker could also be sold to another Italian club side, not necessarily in Serie A.

If this crystallises, he will be the fifth player from Australia to enter the pro ranks of Italian Soccer.

■ ■ ■

RAUL BLANCO, Australia's 2000 Olympics coach, has done a marvellous job in his selection of a squad of 30 which he released last week to the media for the three

exhibition matches against the Brazilian Olympic touring side.

It appears that a hell of a lot of thinking was done by Blanco before finalising his squad of 30.

But the ever switched on Blanco stated late last week: "I will always keep the door open for any player that shows me he deserves to come into Australia's Olympic squad.

The squad is:

GOALKEEPERS: J Didulica (Mel Knights), A Brodbeck (Wollongong City), D Milosevic (Preussen Munster, Ger).



Raul Blanco: Australia's 2000 Olympics' coach.

DEFENDERS: S Colosimo (Carlton), H Foxe (Armenia Bielefeld, Ger), T Baser (Sth Mel), C Blatsis (Sth Mel), A Seric (Hadjuk Split, Cro), D Culina (Syd Utd), M Bell (Brisbane Strikers), S Laybutt (Brisbane Strikers), I Zelic (Canberra Cosmos), L Osman (Gippsland Falcons).

MIDFIELDERS: V Grella (Carlton), N Spencer (Wollongong City), B Damianos (Sth Mel), J Burns (Syd Utd), J Culina (Syd Utd), L Neill (Millwall, Eng), K Wehrman (Brisbane Strikers), N Sabljak (Ad City), B Emerton (Syd Olympic).

STRIKERS: C Zane (Newcastle Breakers), C Gonzalez (Syd Olympic), M Curcija (Sth Mel), H Kewell (Leeds Utd, Eng), A

Thompson (Gippsland Falcons), P Buljan (Canberra Cosmos), T Dodd (Ad City), K Salapasis (Ad City).

■ ■ ■

TROY HALPIN, the former Newcastle Breakers wizard midfielder, is almost certain to play this weekend for his new club Perth Glory against Carlton at Perth Oval.

A press conference has been scheduled in Perth this week to unveil Halpin to the local media.

Although he still had five months of his contract to serve with John Kosmina's team, Newcastle reluctantly released their young dynamic creative midfielder to 'Go West'.



Troy Halpin: Perth Glory's latest signing.

MARCONI v UTS OLYMPIC



MARCONI STADIUM THIS SATURDAY NIGHT

KICK OFF — 7.00 PM
EARLY GAME — 5.00 PM



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NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE...

A sometimes 'tongue in cheek' look at football in Australia.

Compiled by Micky Brock & Stuart Jones



"To buy Alex Tobin a pair of socks so that he doesn't have to wear his football socks around everywhere, and to loan him some cash for a decent haircut."

Craig Foster:
Portsmouth and Australia

"I wish the long and painful march of the game in this country accelerates and it reaches its full potential in Australia."

Johnny Warren:
1974 Australian international and SBS commentator

"To be free from work and able to go to Wollongong to watch them win the Grand Final by a mere six goals."

Stuart Jones:
ABSW correspondent



"That Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer have a war over the TV rights for soccer so that I can then get \$300,000 per year for turning up."

Francis Awaritefe:
Marconi Fairfield striker

"To get married if South Melbourne win the Grand Final. So you'd better win boys!"

Jodee Rogers:
ABSW

"To do more to convince the Australian commercial sector, and our ignorant politicians, about the value of the 'real' football."

Les Murray:
Head of Sport, SBS

"For Perth Glory to somehow find a way to score goals from dead ball situations, something that their opponents seem able to manage with relative ease!"

Richard Kreider:
ABSW WA correspondent and author of 'A Soccer Century'

"Hopefully to see Australia qualify for the 2002 World Cup Finals in South Korea and Japan and avoid the gut wrenching demise of the 1997 campaign."

Bobby Despotovski:
Perth Glory striker

"Peace to dominate the planet and the powder keg situation in Ireland to be diffused as soon as possible, Liverpool to press Man Utd for the championship and the 'All Ordinaries' on the Australian Stock Exchange to climb over 2700 points."

John Economos:
ABSW staff reporter



"To find an international room mate who knows how to do some laundry once in a while (C. Foster Esq?), and doesn't live in the same shirt for two weeks!"

Alex Tobin:
Adelaide City and Australia

"To see more professionalism in all levels of the game. For the younger coaches here in Australia to be gradually brought into the national coaching ranks, and for the importing of top coaches for coaching seminars."

To see more international matches for the Socceroos, perhaps a Pacific Cup, featuring sides like Japan, Korea, Mexico, US, Canada and Australia? Also I would like to see FIFA host major Soccer tournaments in Australia."

Ted Simmons:
AAP

"To implement expedient measures,

applied in a perspicacious way to restructure, contemporaneously, the fundamentals of our game."

1: Soccer Australia officials to dress as members of the Spice Girls until we qualify for the World Cup.

2: Players' goalscoring celebrations to be restricted to abridged performances of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', or, for the away sides, 'Othello'.

3: The Lidcombe Gasworks to become principal sponsors of an expanded 27 team NSL (you can't tell me that won't fire the public's imagination; 52 rounds, one for each week of the year. Too much Soccer is barely enough.)"

Aidan Ormond:
ABSW sub-editor

"For Ayr United to have accepted David Murray's offer, he went off and bought Glasgow Rangers instead, and see the lads lift the European Cup."

Roy Hay:
ABSW Youth League correspondent

"To live long enough to join the massed ranks of Cosmos fans that will pack the Grand Final staged at the SFS and hear the immortal chant: 'Ooh Ahh Canberra, say we are Canberra.'"

Nationally, I'd like to see the youngsters coming through and for all factions of the game in Australia to start pulling in the same direction. Enough of the back biting ego trips."

Micky Brock:
ABSW editor

FROM THE TOP

"In three months time that Adelaide City will be



at the business end of the season and playing in the Grand Final once more."

John Nyskohous:
Coach, Adelaide City

"To win more games and hope this second half of the season be the opposite in



terms of results."

Frank Farina:
Coach, Brisbane Strikers



"I would hope that we can play to our expectations and to satisfy the soccer public in general, and the Canberra supporters, with our performances. For the game, I hope that all the parties get together and work as a unit instead of against each other. Soccer has a very bright future if, and when, this happens."

Branko Culina:
Coach, Canberra Cosmos



"To make the Finals of course, and for soccer in Australia to work more with the youth we have, as they are the key to our future and build on the Olympic side we have now and use that as base for the World Cup side."

Eddie Krncevic:
Coach, Carlton



"We want to put together a sequence of three wins, in that case, we are right back into competition for the top six. The future of Australian soccer is in the

hands of god, we have got the best human material but unfortunately, just like our school system in general, we are not giving our best education to the kids. Sadly, the wrong sort of people are teaching our U/8s."

Frank Arok:
Coach, Gippsland Falcons



"Let's hope to see less of the 'big statements' and more of the work done. Too many want to make statements. They can't see the wood for the trees."

Zoran Matic:
Coach, Marconi Fairfield



"I would hope the National League clubs would have the courage to get together to run their own affairs so that they get the benefit of the product they produce each week, benefits from TV and associated areas. Eleven v eleven coaching topics should be introduced into the National coaching scheme to make it truly worthwhile."

Ken Worden:
Coach, Melbourne Knights



"For Australian soccer to keep the profile building it has been in the last 18 months, for the administration to become more professional and for the Breakers to stop giving silly goals away and getting back into

contention come Finals time."

John Kosmina:
Coach, Newcastle Breakers



"I'd like to see Glory up there with the top clubs and have a big finals series. Let's maintain the impetus of the Socceroos during 1997 and wish all the success for the Olyroos, against Brazil and beyond, and put up a good showing in the 2000 Olympic Games."

Gary Marocchi:
Coach, Perth Glory

"Every club tries to achieve the ultimate, one that is capable of winning the championship. Our expectations are high and the whole club has the target of finishing in the top two come finals time. We're looking to hit our peak in about a months time and especially when Paul Trimoli settles back down into our system again and when we get players like Nick Orlic back from injury. (Sadly, coach Ange Postecoglou was on holiday and unavailable for comment)."

Barry Horsfall:
Marketing Manager, Sth Melbourne



"To not get any more injuries for starters, Peter Tsekenis out with bruised ribs just as we start getting players back and for the younger quality players to remain in Australia longer."

Geoff Harcombe:
Coach, UTS Olympic

"Hopefully Sydney United can stay in the top six and make the Grand Final, (winning it of course!). For soccer in Australia I wish that we could have more



international companies involved in the game so that we can have more professional players HERE before they eventually head off overseas and the starting up of an Asian competition of some sort, without the involvement of New Zealand."

David Mitchell:
Coach, Sydney United



"My hope for soccer in this country is that all in it are healthy, happy and the game prospers like we all know it can. For myself, I'll have to change my 'see food' diet and lose ten kilos."

Adrian Santrac:
Coach, Adelaide Sharks



"On a personal level, to remain happy and healthy with less stress, but I'm not sure how that will come about though, (less stress that is!). On the national front, we must learn from our mistakes (not making the World Cup, which will hit us harder in June), and basically to appreciate all the young talent coming through because there's a lot more of it these days, they're everywhere and it's great to see."

Nick Theodorakopoulos:
Coach, Wollongong City

Thanks to all who gave their time to us and ABSW wishes all our teams, coaches, players, administrators and supporters a fantastic new year.

AROUND THE CLUBS

VIC PREMIER UNDER WAY IN JANUARY

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Victoria's Premier League gets under way on January 23.

This early start to the year has pleased many of the coaches and their clubs who aren't fond of playing on sub-standard pitches before tiny crowds in the cold winter months of Melbourne.

It is a step in the right direction and will probably lead to the establishment of, like its equal in NSW, a summer competition running alongside the Ericsson Cup.

However last season was not one to remember. Some 16 coaching changes and scorelines of 11-0 made the league a joke, and it desperately needs to restore some credibility this time around.

As a result of the drop in standard, fewer Ericsson Cup clubs now look to the Premier League as a fertile ground for player recruitment.

Only Ivan Jolic and Damon Collina (Melbourne Knights), Nick Tsaltas and Zlatko

Mihajlovic (Gippsland Falcons) have made the transition from Premier to National league.

But in the past, clubs such as the Knights have virtually built their sides out of players who have come from the Premier League.



Ollie and Tom Pondeljak, Adrian and David Cervinski to name just a few.

Now, it's a different story. Take the case of Sash Markovski...

He finished last season as top scorer for Sunshine Georgies with 25 goals, earning him trials with Carlton and Perth Glory among others.

But after looking like a different class to anything else the Premier League had to offer, he simply didn't

impress Perth or Carlton.

NEW BOYS HIGHLIGHT OF ROUND ONE

This season promises to be interesting if nothing else. Gone are whipping boys Melton and North Geelong and coming up from the First Division are Moorabbin City and South Dandenong.

Moorabbin, an ambitious club with big plans, finished runners-up to champion South Dandenong and the two face off in the first round.

The big game out of round one is the Grand Final replay between Altona Magic and Bulleen Inter Kings.

Premier League

ROUND ONE FIXTURES

Friday January 23
Port Melbourne Sharks v

Sunshine Georgies - Anderson Reserve - kick off 8.30 pm

Saturday January 24
Moorabbin City v South Dandenong - Kingston Heath Soccer Complex - kick off 6.00 pm

Sunday January 25
Altona Magic v Bulleen Inter Kings - Paisley Park - kick off 8.00 pm

Thomastown Zebras v Fawkner Blues - Partridge Reserve - kick off 6.00 pm

Monday January 26
Heidelberg United v Bentleigh Greens - Olympic Village - kick off 6.00 pm

Green Gully Cavaliers v Preston Lions - Green Gully Reserve - kick off 8.00 pm

St Albans Saints v Springvale White Eagles - Churchill Reserve - kick off 6.00 pm



FROM COALS TO GLORY

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory now have seen a third set of brothers on their books following the signing of Newcastle Breakers' dynamic attacking midfielder Troy Halpin, who will link up with younger brother Scott in time for next Sunday's home clash with Carlton.

Troy played his final game for the Newcastle club last Friday against Marconi-Fairfield, even though his contract doesn't expire until June.

"We are extremely delighted to welcome Troy to Perth Glory and I am sure he will be a great asset," said Glory General manager Roger Lefort.

"I have been after him for over two years," said their coach Gary Marocchi. "He is a dangerous player in midfield and will give us some much needed clout with dead-ball situations."

Troy was one of the top-five players nominated for the 1996/97 NSL Player of the Year award, and was selected for the Nintendo Superstars of Soccer tournament early last year. The Halpins succeed Craig and Gareth Naven (Craig has since retired), and Dale (now with Canberra Cosmos) and Marc Wingell (released) as the next brothers to line up for the Glory.

It is anticipated that his attacking middle-third presence alongside Socceroo Ernie Tapai will benefit the team greatly, especially after some very ordinary performances in recent weeks.

Nigerian midfielder Peter Anosike, possible the national league's most expensive substitute, has struggled to settle down with the Glory, and it is quite possible he could be loaned out to a local premier league club for much needed match practice in the Night Series competition, to be played soon.

Troy has already played in the West, where he featured

with premier league side Stirling in season 1994, netting 13 goals.

Meanwhile, Tapai is champing at the bit to play for the Glory again, his last game was at Gippsland Falcons on November 30.

It is hoped he will be fit for this Sunday's Carlton game after sustaining a torn, right thigh muscle during Socceroo training in Saudi Arabia at last month's Confederations Cup tournament.



Troy Halpin: Bound for Glory.

Ceccoli's Ambition

By Phil Murphy

Alvin Ceccoli has a burning ambition to wear the Green and Gold.

He also has the ability to achieve his goal.

The Wollongong City utility player is one of the most consistent performers in the Ericsson Cup and this season has played as a marker, wide on the left, and is one of the reasons why Wolves have been so successful.

Ceccoli was at the MCG recently when the Socceroos missed their opportunity to make the World Cup Finals. He is hoping there will be opportunities for new faces to make the Australian team and, if that is the case, 23-year old Ceccoli is a prime candidate.

He recently celebrated his 50th NSL appearance, coming up through the Sydney Olympic junior teams. Before one game, his coach was short of a left-sided player and switched him to that role. He graduated to the youth team and, at 17, made his senior debut in a pre-season cup tie. At that stage, Ceccoli suffered a stress fracture to his back and that resulted in 12 months away from the game.

When he returned to training with Olympic he was to suffer other niggling injuries and ended up playing with Rockdale in the State League.

That was where former Wolves coach Berti Mariani picked him up, and Ceccoli made an immediate impact at Brandon Park.

He was playing wide on the left and soon made a name for himself with a number of eye-catching performances.

Now in his third season with Wollongong, he started the campaign as a marker and was equally effective.

With the likes of George Souris, Robbie Stanton, Jason Connolly and David Huxley so effective at the back, coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was able to release Ceccoli to his original role and he is thriving in the change.

Ceccoli told ABSW he prefers to play in the attacking midfield role. "I was back at marker because we were a bit short in the department," he said.

"I prefer the wide role because I am going at people and more involved in the game. Having scored three goals is a real bonus."

Ceccoli believes he has the ability and dedication to the game to justify his selection in a national squad.

He said his ambitions at present were to help Wolves make the play-offs and to gain international recognition.



Robbie Stanton: Strong at the back, a perfect foil for Ceccoli's left sided forays forward.

"I believe we will emerge as real top four contenders in the next few weeks. The boys have been playing really well, that first-half performance against Carlton at Brandon Park was something special.

"That kind of thing doesn't just happen, we work really hard to get results.

"I would say we are one of the fittest, if not the fittest, sides in the league and that helps get results," he added.

When he isn't playing soccer or working, Ceccoli likes to relax water-skiing on the Hawkesbury River or horse riding.

At the moment, he is negotiating a new contract with Wollongong and says he is enjoying his football at Brandon Park. He seems certain to renew his contract and remain there, and that's got to be good news.

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We Can Beat Brazil

Dear Sir,

We showed how naive we can be twice in the space of a month. After holding Brazil to a 0-0 draw we had the psychological advantage over them. They were fuming, what we should have done in the final is frustrate them, holding possession as long as we could and defend every attacking move.

Why try to play the Brazilians on their terms? We should have played to our strengths. Every country has its strengths and weaknesses, giving them their unique style. The Germans can't play like the Brazilians and vice-versa.

I think too much is said on how the Brazilians play. You don't get points for Soccer style, it's not about which style is better to watch, it's

about which style will win you the game. We have to learn to play for a result.

We played on their terms and got punished for it. It was great for the boys to get to the final but to lose 6-0 was a little embarrassing. A lot of teams beat themselves even before playing Brazil. That's exactly what they want us to do.

I believe we can beat them but we must not be tactically naive. We must play a smarter game, one that will give us the result we desire.

How do you think David killed Goliath?

Paul Bottari,
Balcatta, WA

Editor's note: I think beating Brazil is a lot easier to say than actually do. Especially when you have ten men!

O/S Coaches ... For Now

Dear Sir,

Recently there has been much debate about the direction of coaching and the development of home grown coaches.

There has been the suggestion from many corners that names like Kosmina, Krncevic, Farina and Mitchell be considered for the various Australian teams (U23, senior, etc). I feel that these sentiments are at best premature.

I do agree that former Socceroos need to be encouraged to be involved in the game, but I don't feel that by indiscriminately handing them positions as coaches is the answer.

If you think of the great teams throughout the world you realise only a small percentage are coached by ex-

greats. I firmly believe that all prospective coaches, whether former Socceroos or just ex-suburban players, should have to serve a healthy apprenticeship.

With all due respect, Kosmina Krncevic, Mitchell and Farina haven't been coaching for any considerable period.

However, they have a lot to offer but by giving them national teams it won't help them or the players.

Admittedly coaching accreditation in Australia leaves a lot to be desired. So when Soccer Australia has to appoint new coaches I challenge them to continue to select the best, like Venables for instance, and not facilitate an 'old boys' club.

Rodney Feher
Woollahra, NSW

Letters to the Editor

Have your say on any soccer issue in the world. Preference will be given to short letters. Include daytime phone



number for verification.

Short letters of about 400 words will be given preference in this column.

The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper

The Editor,
AUSTRALIAN &
BRITISH SOCCER
WEEKLY
PO BOX 155,
MARRICKVILLE
NSW 2204
Fax: (02) 9550-9332

Asian Champions' Cup?

Dear Sir,

I would like if ABSW would do exactly the same, as L'Equipe (French Sports News) did in 1955, they organised, and started the European Champions' Cup. (How? Ask them!) And after followed the Cup Winners'

Cup etc.

Could your ABSW patronise, and somehow start the Asian Champions' Cup? The idea is to better the Ericsson Cup playing level. Hopefully one day we can invite and play against clubs such as Chelsea, Liverpool, Juventus,

and ... and?

R Marton
St Marys, NSW

PS. Dear Mr Brock, Please do not 'ride' on our unbeaten record, because you know it well, it was achieved against weak teams! Minus Brazil — those games were

just good training exercises, so who are you kidding?

Editor's note: Understrength sides? Practice matches? Wake up and smell the coffee mate! Enough said.

Football Australia?

Dear Sir,

Congratulations to the Aussies for putting a good show at the Confederations Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Considering the 6-0 scoreline in the final against Brazil, the boys played some great football at times. I, and so many of my friends out there, agree that Terry Venables must continue as Australian coach for the next World Cup campaign. He's done so much for the game of football in this country in such a short period of time.

I would also like to say about the National League,

the league needs to be marketed in a better way. Some clubs are only averaging 5,000 people a game. In my opinion clubs like South Melbourne, Sydney United, UTS Olympic, Melbourne Knights, and Adelaide Sharks must be replaced by new 'Australian' backed clubs.

These clubs have been in the league for far too long and have never tried to attract a new breed of support.

They continue to bring the game in to dispute over racial conflicts. So the sooner David Hill makes changes to the league the better.

Finally I would like to say that we must start calling our game 'football' and not soccer. I'm sure a lot of people out there agree, because in every part of the world they call it football.

The hierarchy at 'Soccer Australia' must change its name to the 'Australian Football Association'.

Australian and British Soccer Weekly should have a vote about that issue and send it to David Hill.

P.S. I do not wish to publish my surname and address.

'Alex'

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All package prices based on Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane.
Applicable add one for other capital cities. First Class, Business and Round World options are available.
Published 1st June 1997. Recommended Prices Only. Prices may vary due to Exchange Rates.

Rising Stars

National Youth League Rd 14

By Roy Hay

SOUTHERN DIVISION

FALCONS DRAW

The Victorian Institute of Sport and Gippsland Falcons drew one-all at Kim Reserve on Saturday. Boris Ovcin's cross was expertly dispatched by striker Zoran Petrevski after 35 minutes to give the Institute the lead in the first-half.

Gippsland came back after the interval with Brian McNichol pulling the strings and they deservedly equalised with a penalty kick on 80 minutes. Adrian Cuzzupe was the outstanding player for the VIS.

ALBURY WIN AGAIN

An own goal by Bentleigh Greens gave Albury Wodonga its third win of the season in very hot conditions in Albury.

Menzies and Pizzini starred for the home team and Wilkinson and Kourkoutzelos were the pick of the Greens. The home team was on top early, but the Greens finished strongly yet just could not score.

KNIGHTS HAMMER BERGERS

It took Melbourne Knights till virtually the last kick of the first-half to break through against Heidelberg United, but then the floodgates opened and the Knights added five second half goals.

The game was notable for some extraordinary misses. Adis Kablar scored a hat-trick for the Knights but could have had six, including one effort from just under the cross bar which rose to hit the woodwork.

For Heidelberg, Wasame Yusuf had a fine run and shot which was parried by Steve Pavlovic but it went straight to Tony Ouliaris, who was inside the goal area unmarked. Somehow Ouliaris scooped the ball over the bar. Kablar thumped home a shot from an oblique angle for the best of his three goals, then John Kalabric twice lifted the ball over defenders before volleying home for a quite outrageous goal. Michael Bosevski buried a penalty kick and Damon Collina was put through by Ivan Razov for the final goal.

The match between the two South Melbourne teams will be played on 25 January, and Carlton used its bye to play a match against its own Colts team.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

PELEGRINO WINS IT

Newcastle Breakers conceded an early own goal and eventually went down by two goals to one at home to Marconi Fairfield. Peter Juchniewicz equalised for the Breakers but Eduardo Pellegrino grabbed a late winner for Marconi.

BROWNLIE QLD'S HERO

Queensland Academy of Sport and the New South Wales Institute were locked scoreless in the first-half, only for Royce Brownlie to score the only goal in the second-half to give QAS its victory.

UNITED THRASH OLYMPIC

Sydney United Colts beat UTS Olympic Colts by four goals to one. Tony Krslovic contributed a hat-trick on 5, 40 and 60 minutes and Michael Clare scored the fourth in 24 minutes.

Philip Marzec replied for Olympic Colts after 28 minutes.

WOLVES EASILY

Wollongong City had a comfortable three-nil win over Marconi Fairfield Colts at Marconi Stadium. The first-half was quite even, though Wollongong managed two goals through Noel Spencer after 31 minutes and Cane Maccabi after 40.

Thereafter the Colts tried to chase the game and were caught late on by Paul Tuturevski for a third goal to the Wolves.

SOUTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

VIS	1	Gippsland Falcons	1
Petrevski		Mitroulas	
Melbourne Knights	6	Heidelberg United	0
Kablar	3		
Kalabric			
Bosevski			
Collina			
Albury Wodonga	1	Bentleigh Greens	0
og			
South Melbourne Rockets		South Melbourne	
(Playing 25 January 1998)			
Bulleen Inter, Altona Magic, Carlton: all byes			

NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS

N'castle Breakers	1	Marconi Fairfield	2
Juchniewicz		og, Pellegrino	
QAS	1	NSWIS	0
Brownlie			
Marconi F'ield C	0	Wollongong City	3
		Spencer	
		Maccabi	
		Tutrevski	
Sydney Utd Colts	4	UTS Olympic Colts	1
Krslovic	3	Marzec	
Clare			
A C T A S v UTS Olympic Colts playing Monday			
Sydney United: bye			

SOUTHERN DIVISION TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
M Knights	11	9	0	2	40	13	27
Melbourne Knights	12	10	0	2	46	13	30
Carlton	10	9	0	1	21	4	27
Gippsland Falcons	11	8	2	1	22	8	26
VIS	11	6	2	3	29	14	20
Bulleen Inter	10	4	1	5	13	17	13
Bentleigh Greens	11	4	1	6	11	19	13
Heidelberg United	11	4	1	6	12	24	13
Albury Wodonga	11	3	0	8	14	18	9
South Melbourne	10	2	2	6	20	18	8
Altona Magic	9	1	2	6	11	26	5
SM Rockets	10	1	1	8	9	47	4

NORTHERN DIVISION TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	12	9	2	1	57	10	29
UTS Olympic	11	7	2	2	33	17	23
QAS	12	6	4	2	30	14	22
Wollongong City	12	6	3	3	28	21	21
Marconi Fairfield	12	5	2	5	20	24	17
Marconi Fairfield Colts	12	5	2	5	18	26	17
Newcastle Breakers	12	4	3	5	24	26	15
ACTAS	11	4	3	4	14	28	15
Sydney United	11	2	6	3	23	25	12
NSWIS	12	2	3	7	16	20	9
Sydney United Colts	11	2	1	8	8	32	7
UTS Olympic Colts	12	2	1	9	15	42	7

LEADING SCORERS

Zoran Petrevski (Sth)	VIS	13
Mile Sterjovski (Nth)	AIS	21

ROUND 15 FIXTURES SOUTHERN DIVISION

Friday January 9, 1998	
Sth Melb v VIS (5.30pm, Bob Jane Stadium)	
Saturday January 10, 1998	
G Falcons v Melb Knights (3.30pm, Falcons Pk)	
Altona Magic v Carlton (5.30pm, Paisley Park)	
Monday January 12, 1998	
Bulleen Inter v B Greens (7pm, Wembley Park)	

Wednesday January 14, 1998
A Magic v Sth Melb Rockets (6.30pm, Paisley Pk)
Heidelberg Utd, Albury Wodonga: bye

NORTHERN DIVISION

Saturday January 10, 1998	
M Fairfield v UTS Oly (4.30pm, Marconi Stad)	
NSWIS v Sydney Utd Colts (5pm, Valentine Pk)	
UTS Oly Colts v QAS (4pm, St George Stadium)	
Sunday January 11, 1998	
Sydney United v ACTAS (4pm Parramatta Stad)	
Wollongong City v AIS (3.30pm, Brandon Park)	
Newcastle Breakers, Marconi Fairfield Colts Bye	

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ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports



KUPRESAK DENIES PERTH AND GLORY

SYDNEY UNITED.....0 PERTH GLORY.....0

By John Economos

SYDNEY UNITED, although severely depleted without four of their key players, but gallantly inspired by veteran centre-back Velimir Kupresak, still managed to hold a spirited Perth Glory to a scoreless draw last Sunday night at the Parramatta Stadium.

Through injuries and suspensions, United took the field without their highly experienced strike-duo David Mitchell and Abbas Saad, powerful sweeper Richard Plesa and highly experienced left defender Stuart Munro.

Perth was not much better off, having international flank-

midfielder Ernie Tapai out with a thigh injury sustained in the Confederations Cup as well as their powerful left footer Paul Strudwick.

Player coach Mitchell had to quickly 'glue-up' a makeshift Sydney United line-up, electing to play with a straight flat back four whilst at the other end Mitchell was forced to gamble by pairing for the first time young striker Nick Bosevski with Mario Jerman to spearhead his attack.

The first session ended in a scrappy affair as both sides were guilty of poor passing. This led to them constantly losing possession with monotonous regularity which greatly hindered any reasonable chance to form smooth build ups in attack.

However United should have

drawn first blood as early as in the 10th minute when right defender David Barrett lifted a ball over the top of Perth's defence to send Bosevski away. But he had problems in controlling possession inside the box and with just the keeper to beat and a good chance went begging.

Mitchell in the second half introduced little Jason Culina into the attack and much later on brought in most promising former AIS 18-year old Mile Sterjovski. Both did extremely well to sharpen United's attack, especially Sterjovski whose most unselfish and constructive 'feeding' easily caught the eye.

Eight minutes after the break talented Perth striker Bobby Despotovski unleashed a vicious rising drive from the left that

skimmed Zeljko Kalac's crossbar whilst five minutes later Perth's skipper, Gareth Naven, fired a low cross from the right for powerful centre-back Gavin Wilkinson to crack a first time drive well on target, but found the towering Kalac fully switched on to block.

Ten minutes from the end Barrett again was in action when he crossed for young substitute Mile Sterjovski, but his header under pressure flashed just wide of the post, and four minutes later a short United corner by Robbie Hooker saw defender Peter Bennett rattle Perth's crossbar.

There was no better player on the pitch than United's magnificent central defender Velimir Kupresak. The warhorse was so airtight in his defence that he

repeatedly won balls in the tackle to switch defence into attack.

The hard working and competitive Kupresak, despite having seen 34 summers last September, is playing better Soccer than ever before in his career to embarrass his much younger team mates.

A relatively pleased Perth coach Gary Marocchi later analysed: "We gave away the ball too much but now we have had two draws from our last three games and this draw against the league leaders was good for us. We should have taken our opportunities though when United became a bit dodgy but then they came back to have us under pressure. It was not a bad game considering the conditions."

"United are a very tough side and we were about 40% below our best. We had Paul Strudwick, Ernie Tapai out and from next week we will have Troy Halpin into the side hopefully. If we can still accumulate league points without all these

players, it is very good. I felt however that United didn't do just enough to deserve all three points. I believe that 39 League points are what is needed this year to get into the Top Six. We have now got 21 points whereas this time last season we had 23. I have used 22 players so far this season in our first team," ended the always studious Marocchi.

David Mitchell stated later: "We have to kick on with what we've got as we really missed Abbas Saad tonight up front. My defenders were the best tonight and in the second-half we lifted our game after I made some adjustments at half-time on some things that were just not working for us in the first period. This lifted our urgency a lot more, but I was still a little disappointed with the result being at home, but then again I was happy that we didn't get beaten either," smiled the former Australian World Cup striker in his first full season as coach.

SYDNEY UNITED:
Kalac, Barrett, Kupresak, Vrkic, Bennett, Phillips, Bilokapic, Mujanovic (J.Culina 46), Hooker, Bosevski (Sterjovski 73), Jerman (Burns 64).

PERTH GLORY:
Franken, Carbone (McVittie 74), Hay, Buljubasic, Wilkinson, Garcia, Naven, S. Halpin, Miller, Despotovski, Siasia.

CROWD: 5,532

POY:
3 Kupresak (SU)
2 Hay (PG)
1 Vrkic (SU)

MORI'S SENSATIONAL GOAL 100

ADELAIDE CITY 3 SOUTH MELBOURNE 1

By Val Migliaccio

Adelaide City and South Melbourne advertised the best features of Ericsson Cup soccer with a high quality encounter full of excitement and drama in front of 6,100 at Hindmarsh on Sunday.

In the process Damian Mori grabbed his 100th goal — and what a goal it was — to help the home side to a 3-1 win, thus atoning for the loss in Melbourne last week.

In for the Zebras were Mennillo and Brooks for Sabljak and Hassell, while Souths brought in Baser for Blatsis.

This week it was Angelo Costanzo who picked up Paul Trimboli, yet it was the visitors who dominated play early, with the mobile attack-

ing midfield of the Victorian side causing the City defence some problems.

Zebras' custodian Jason



Petkovic was tested early when Goran Lozanovski curled a dipping shot from 25 metres which the national No.3 keeper expertly turned around the post.

Shortly after, in the 11th minute, a defensive mix-up allowed South Melbourne's hard working midfielder

David Clarkson to create an opening, but his powerful shot was again well saved.

The Victorians deservedly took the lead on 19 minutes when Olyroo Billy Damianos split the Zebras' defence with a beautiful ball, allowing Clarkson to this time score.

However Adelaide hit back in the 28th minute when Mori squared a ball to Michael Brooks and he slammed the ball home from 18 metres.

This lifted the home side and in the second stanza they piled on the pressure, but with South counter-punching it was end-to-end stuff of the highest order and a great advertisement for our game.

On 71 minutes Mennillo took a free-kick on the right which was met by Mori who deflected it in to the net off the unlucky Tansel Baser, to make it 2-1.

Mori capped off a fine evening with a superb goal six minutes from time. He ran from the halfway line, side-stepped Steve Iosifidis on the



edge of the box and drove home a beautiful goal past Michael Petkovic for the Zebras' third and final goal.

What a way to bring up your goal number 100: Congratulations Damian Mori.



Damian Mori: He brought up his one hundredth goal in style against South Melbourne.

ZEBRAS: J. Petkovic, Armour, Ivanovic, Tobin, Costanzo, Mori, Mennillo (Hassell 89), Gibson, Trajanovski, Brooks (Dodd 83), Thomas

SOUTH: M. Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Clarkson, Trimboli, Boutsianis (Coveny 23), Lozanovski, Baser, Anastasiadi (Curcija 73), Goutzioulis (Liparoti 76)

SCORERS:
City: Brooks 28, Baser 71og, Mori 84
South: Clarkson 19

CROWD: 6,100

POY:
3 Trimboli (SM)
2 Mori (AC)
1 Armour (AC)

SUSA MAKES IT LOOK SO EASY

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1 ADELAIDE SHARKS 0

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Melbourne Knights' 1-0 victory over Adelaide Sharks on Sunday leaves them hovering just outside the top six, the win coming courtesy of a Zeljko Susa goal in the first half.

Having a squad riddled with injuries and suspensions, Knights coach Ken Worden was ecstatic with the result.

"Taking it all into consideration, we've done really well," he said.

"We defended well for most of the match, we stuck to

the tactics and worked hard, but I'm very pleased that we've come back, especially after last week when we should have walked away with a point."

The Sharks too went in with a depleted line-up, missing suspended Alex Kuzmanovic and the injured Pablo Cardozo.

The league's leading scorer was sorely missed by the Sharks and their case wasn't helped by having Jim Tsekinis only fit enough to make the bench.

Nevertheless, Sharks coach Adrian Santrac blasted his side after the game, saying

that a poor first 45 minutes had cost them the game even though they second half showing was a great improvement.

In a scrappy game, Knights midfielder Zeljko Susa scored his first Ericsson Cup goal after just nine minutes. Ante Deak floated a cross to Tom Pondeljak, who killed the ball perfectly for Susa to blast a left foot volley inside Frank Mikuletic's far post.

Susa was proving to be a danger to the Sharks' defence, having three more good opportunities before the interval.

Twice in a minute he threatened to score, yet his

best chance came after 40 minutes.

Pondeljak again supplied him before he beat two defenders, drew Mikuletic out of goal but slipped the ball agonisingly wide.

Adelaide were a much better team in the second half, but for most of the time they simply found the Knights defence just too hard to penetrate.

They came close in the 52nd minute when Corey Artone set up Alex Castro, but the defender's first time effort on the run was comfortably dealt with by Joe Didulica, who then made a

brilliant one handed stop ten minutes later to deny Jose Iriarte a golden opportunity.

Didulica almost undid all his good work three minutes from time.

A tame cross from Tsekinis was dropped by the Knights'

keeper but Iriarte failed to make him pay, allowing Didulica to block his effort.

"I think we're going quite well, we're in there, it just needs that little bit more to get us into the six," added Knights coach Ken Worden.



Andrew Marth: Man of the Match.

KNIGHTS: Joe Didulica, Kovacevic, Jolic, Banini, Marth, Pondeljak, Kelic, Susa, Nastevski, John Didulica, Deak.

SHARKS: Mikuletic, Castro (Kollias 85), Kokkinoplitis, Artone, Iriarte, Borghetto, Pezos, Perin, Bigu (Tsekinis 80), Cutillo, Misailidis.

SCORER:
Knights: Susa 9

CROWD: 3,500 (approx)

POY:
3 Marth (MK)
2 Susa (MK)
1 Castro (AS)



Results Round Fourteen

Sydney United	0	Perth Glory	0	Adelaide City	3	South Melbourne	1
Melbourne Knights	1	Adelaide Sharks	0	Carlton	1	Wollongong City	0
Brisbane Strikers	1	Gippsland Falcons	2	Newcastle Breakers	0	Marconi Fairfield	0

Canberra Cosmos v UTS Olympic (Played Monday Night)

Round Fifteen Fixtures

Odds courtesy of SportOdds

2.40	Gippsland	3.25	Melbourne Knights	2.60
2.00	Marconi	3.25	UTS Olympic	3.00
1.40	South Melbourne	3.70	Brisbane	6.50
3.00	Wollongong	3.25	Adelaide City	2.00
1.40	Sydney United	3.75	Canberra	7.00
1.70	Perth	3.50	Carlton	4.50
1.80	Adelaide Sharks	3.50	Newcastle	3.50

1998 WORLD CUP

Brazil	4.00
France	7.00
England	8.00
Germany	8.00
Holland	9.00
Italy	9.00
Argentina	13.00
Spain	16.00
Yugoslavia	23.00
Croatia	26.00
Nigeria	29.00
Romania	29.00
Denmark	34.00
Colombia	41.00
Norway	41.00
Bulgaria	51.00
Paraguay	51.00
Belgium	61.00
Austria	91.00
Cameroon	101.00
Chile	126.00
Mexico	126.00
Scotland	141.00
Morocco	151.00
Sth Africa	201.00
Sth Korea	201.00
USA	201.00
Jamaica	251.00
Saudi Arabia	251.00
Japan	401.00
Tunisia	401.00
Iran	501.00

HAJDUK WANDERERS

SOCCER CLUB

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SECOND DIVISION TRIALS

Venue: **Harold Read Park,**
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TIME: 7PM (SHARP)

Firsts & U/21s: Every Tue & Thurs (Jan 6)
U/18s: Every Monday & Wed (Jan 12)
**Also U/21 coach required*

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Charles Abdilla: 0411 525908 or
9757 2906

Phillip Pavela (Head Coach) (B)
9752 9888

(AH) 9896 7096 (M) 0416 209140

ERICSSON CUP LEADING SCORERS

11 Pablo Cardozo	Adelaide Sharks
10 Scott Chipperfield	Wollongong City
9 Damian Mori	Adelaide City
8 Abbas Saad	Sydney United
6 Tom Pondeljak	Melbourne Knights
6 Claytone Zane	Newcastle Breakers
6 Norman Tome	UTS Olympic
6 Anthony Surjan	Wollongong City
5 David Mitchell	Sydney United
5 Bob Despotovski	Perth Glory
5 Paul Trimboli	South Melbourne
5 Brad Maloney	Marconi Fairfield

ERICSSON CUP TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney Utd	14	8	5	1	21	10	29
Sth Melbourne	14	7	5	2	32	21	26
Carlton	14	6	5	3	18	14	23
Perth Glory	14	6	3	5	19	21	21
Adelaide City	10	7	0	3	21	12	21
Wollongong	13	6	1	6	29	14	19
Melb Knights	13	5	4	4	18	15	19
Marconi Fairfield	14	5	3	6	14	20	18
Adelaide Sharks	13	5	2	6	19	21	17
UTS Olympic*	13	5	2	6	14	18	17
Gippsland	14	4	5	5	9	15	17
Brisbane Strikers	14	4	0	10	10	17	12
Canberra*	13	1	6	6	10	27	9
Newcastle	13	1	5	7	14	23	8

*Playing Monday



Bet on Soccer just by
picking up the phone.

132 946 ...that's 132 WIN!

Round 15 Preview

By Stuart Jones

Sydney United v Canberra

Round one this year and United won 3-1 over the Cosmos. At home last year the Pumas won 7-2. Branko, and Ante Moric will be keen to impress on his return home but it will be a tough ask.

Hunter at the back for Canberra, Munro for United, is someone setting up a Scottish football player retirement village? (tongue firmly in cheek boys, you are both much stronger than I am!)

Prediction: Sydney United

SYDNEY UNITED



Marconi v UTS Olympic

The Sydney derby, and in the first round a last minute Nick Carle goal for UTS was all the difference. The story was much different out Fairfield way last year with the Stallions winning 5-1. Both teams out for revenge...

Prediction: Draw

Gippsland v Melbourne Knights

Thanks to a Nick Palamaras goal in round one the Falcons were victorious. Last year the Knights won this game at home by one goal. Many would think this would normally be a high scoring game but it has not been in the past.

Prediction: Melbourne Knights

South Melbourne v Brisbane

Souths started strongly this season with a 3-0 away victory over the reigning champions.

Last year at Lakeside the final whistle blew with the score at 4-0 to the local boys. Could well be another strong showing from the ????

Prediction: South Melbourne

Wollongong v Adelaide City

This first round clash was postponed and last year Wollongong upset City 1-0 at Brandon Park, and even drew 0-0 with them away. These teams could well match up after February this season as well.

Prediction: Wollongong Wolves



Perth v Carlton

Carlton started well this year with a win over the Glory but these road trips are becoming harder for them in recent weeks. Perhaps the two

Halpin brothers together could help Perth as well...

Prediction: Perth

Adelaide Sharks v Newcastle

These two always seen to meet on the opener for the season, and Newcastle seem to come at on top pretty regularly, this year the Breakers won 4-2.

Last season it had been 6-1. However in Adelaide it was a different story with the then West Adelaide victorious 2-1.

Prediction: Adelaide



AUBURN UNITED SOCCER CLUB

PLAYERS/TRAINING SCHEDULE

EVERY:

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

FRIDAY NIGHTS

TIME: 6.30pm

1st GRADE — RESERVES — U/18

VENUE:

Mona Park, Auburn

CONTACT: John KARACAN 9646 4897

Ali 0418 677 379

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
KADRI SERTBAS (MOBILE)

019 405 366

(HOME)

9871 3467



ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports



ARCHIE THOMPSON — FALCONS' HERO

BRISBANE STRIKERS 1 GIPPSLAND FALCONS 2

By Glenn Davis

A double from Gippsland Falcons' new Olyroo selection, Archie Thompson, upset a bold gamble by Frank Farina as Brisbane were beaten by Gippsland Falcons at Suncorp Stadium last Saturday night.

Thompson, chosen four days earlier for the upcoming series against Brazil's U/23 team, came off the bench in the 65th minute to deal a shattering blow to the Strikers' top six hopes.

In a master stroke by Frank Arok, Thompson provided the much needed impetus for Gippsland to claw back a one goal deficit to snatch victory

in the dying moments of a thrilling encounter.

However, Farina caused a pre-match sensation when he dropped himself, along with skipper Andy Harper and former Young Socceroo Troy Cranney due to inconsistent performances.

The gamble looked like paying off as the reigning champion clearly dominated proceedings, despite going to the break on level terms after a scoreless first half.

The Strikers, who also were celebrating the selection of three players in the Olyroos, looked a far superior outfit and in Farina's words could have gone to the break with at least a two or three goal buffer.

Rod Brown broke the deadlock, superbly finishing

off from close range a perfect cross from dynamic young midfielder Kasey Wehrman — starting for the first time this season since breaking an ankle last June.

The busy midfielder provided the necessary spark, something that has been sadly lacking so far this year.

Gippsland had little to offer in the first half and it wasn't until midway through the second stanza before they began to claw their way back.

The Strikers watched in dismay as goals went begging in the first half, to stand-in skipper Nick Meredith with a 30 metre dipping shot and Brown, who curled a shot fractionally past the far upright. Zoricich also had a header scrambled clear.

After the home side

eventually went ahead, Arok began to shuffle his men like chess pieces and was rewarded with a stunning display from Thompson. Latching onto a rebound off of a Claudio Canosa rocket he popped up to equalise.

The eventual winner came on the stroke of 90 minutes when Thompson sliced through a gap to pounce on a perfect defence splitting pass from Levent Osman, the other Olyroo selection, to drill home his second.

Farina rated Thompson as the difference between the two sides.

"He's a great impact player on tonight's performance.

"I thought we had enough chances to win the game in the first half, which was one of our best for a long time."



Kasey Wehrman: Thompson spoiled Kasey's return to the big-time.

As for the Falcons it has been quite a week — beating the champions twice and having the honour of two players being selected for the

Olyroos' 2000 squad. The Falcons are now a top six chance. Their dream continues while the Striker's nightmare goes on inexorably.

STRIKERS: Bolton, Gwynne, Zoricich, Meredith, S Cranney, Brown, Wehrman (Battistin 82), Knipe (Harper 58), Hews (T Cranney 70), Laybutt, Packer.

GIPPSLAND: Kourtis, Bell, Canosa, Gotis, Sekulic, Foy (Marcina 68), Osman, Hastie, Mihajlovic (Byrne89), Palamaras (Thompson 65), Tsaltas

SCORERS:
Strikers: Brown 46
Falcons: Thompson 74, 90

CROWD: 4,050

POY
3 Thompson (GF)
2 Wehrman (BS)
1 Brown (BS)

HALPIN'S GLORIOUS FAREWELL FIZZLES

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0 MARCONI FAIRFIELD 0

By Jai McDermott

Troy Halpin's last game in a Newcastle shirt sparkled but eventually faded as the home side drew 0-0 with the Marconi on Friday night at Topper Stadium in front of almost 4,000.

While the Perth Glory bound midfielder was substituted late in the game, the Breakers sang a familiar tune of missed opportunities.

Both sides began brightly, with the Novocastrians particularly aggressive in the opening exchanges.

A controversial moment

came in the 29th minute when Marconi striker Sean Babic surged into the Breakers box and was tackled forcefully by McManus. The referee did not award what looked like a penalty, even though Babic left the field and his season now appears to be in doubt.

As a result Chi Chi Mendez assumed a more forward role and the Sydneysiders looked dangerous as half-time approached.

Francis Awaritefe found room in the area after an insightful Brendan Renaud pass. The lanky striker might have done better despite a narrow angle — his shot flew

over the bar.

Shortly after, inspirational front man Clayton Zane (named last week in the Olyroo squad) turned brilliantly to beat Dominic Longo. He surged on and on, bursting through some feeble defending, but Ante Covic was up to the task, spreading his frame well to block his effort.

Just after the break another precise ball from Brendan Renaud found Mendez free on the edge of the penalty area, but the uncompromising McManus had the final say with another crucial challenge as the striker shaped to shoot.

Halpin's expected supernova failed to eventuate but did flash briefly on the hour. Picking the ball up wide on the right Halpin glided past two defenders. His left foot bender was hit off balance but only a finger tip save from Covic kept the scores level.

The always dangerous Zane again beat three defenders with a surging run before picking up the angled run of substitute striker Liam McGuire, who missed what could have been a winner.

Mark Wilson released two long range drives as the clock wound down but Covic watched both sail high over



Sean Babic: The livewire striker was stretched off and is now in some doubt for the season.

the bar.

Newcastle coach John Kosmina described the result as "a solid point". He was well pleased with the patience and effort of his young charges, and while he admitted "all

three points would have been great", he insisted their share of luck would come.

Stallions boss Zoran Matic was content with a point from the always tricky trip to Newcastle.

BREAKERS: Baker, Sprod (West 87), Alan, Pryce, McManus, Ironside, Wilson, Zane, Halpin (Lane), Zemett (McGuire), Lowe.

STALLIONS: Covic, M Babic, Longo, Casserly, Maloney, S Babic (Care), Awaritefe, Renaud, Kim, Zoric, Mendez.

CROWD: 3,892.

POY:
3 Zane (NB)
2 Covic (MS)
1 Lowe (NB)

MARKOVSKI, COLOSIMO TAME WOLVES

CARLTON 1 WOLLONGONG CITY 0

By John Rigas

Carlton ended a four game winless streak with a hard fought 1-0 victory over Wollongong City at Optus Oval on Saturday.

Striker John Markovski was their inspiration, he fired Carlton to victory in the 21st minute with a well taken goal and was a constant thorn in the Wolves' side.

He goal was typical Markovski, he powerfully shrugged off a defender to plant his effort past Olyroo keeper Adam Brodbeck for his fifth goal of the season.

Nevertheless Carlton were given a lifeline after three

minutes when Robert Trajkovski cleared an Alvin Cecoli header off the line.

In the absence of Alan Hunter, Olyroo Simon Colosimo held the Carlton defence together with another inspirational display. Colosimo cleaned up everything that came his way and even found time to get forward in Carlton's attacking raids.

In the 13th minute a Vince Grella cross was fumbled by Brodbeck but the young keeper recovered to save at the feet of Lupo Lapsansky.

Markovski again went close in the 33rd minute with a trademark free kick from 25 metres which narrowly curled past the post.

Carlton began the second half in determined mood with their goal scorer flicking an attempt just wide within a minute of the restart.

Moments later the Carlton striker played provider, this time for Andy Vlahos, who could not keep his volley below the bar.

Big 'Jonesy' continued to worry Wollongong's defence with a further two strikes on goal within seven minutes.

And in the dying minutes Vlahos supplied midfielder Robert Trajkovski who, with a trademark rocket, narrowly missed the goal frame.

Wollongong coach Nick Theodorakopoulos was not disappointed with the result.

"Territorially we obviously had them, in the last twenty minutes we had to push forward (for a goal). It was another one goal loss in Melbourne and we basically matched them, I don't think the boys should be too worried."

Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic said that he was happy with the attitude of his players and also said it was a gutsy effort coming back from last week's loss in Wollongong.

Krncevic told his players before the game to start the second half of the season fresh, forgetting about the twenty points they already have clocked up.

It obviously worked.



Andy Vlahos: The perfect foil for John Markovski's powerful attacking style.

CARLTON: Anastasiadis, Trajkovski, Douglas, Marusic (Allsopp 80), Lapsansky (Vargas 59), Vlahos, Colosimo, Grella, Markovski (Stergiopoulos 85), Cervinski, Atkinson.

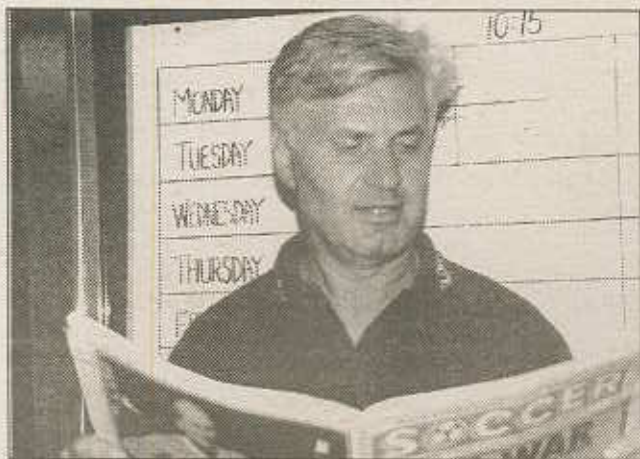
WOLVES: Brodbeck, Ceccoli (Sevin 46), Stanton, Horsley, Surjan, Reda, Chipperfield, Souris (Connolly 67), Perinich, Huxley, Masi (Dimoski 80).

SCORER:
Carlton: Markovski 21

CROWD: 2,000 (approx)

POY
3 Colosimo (C)
2 Markovski (C)
1 Trajkovski (C)

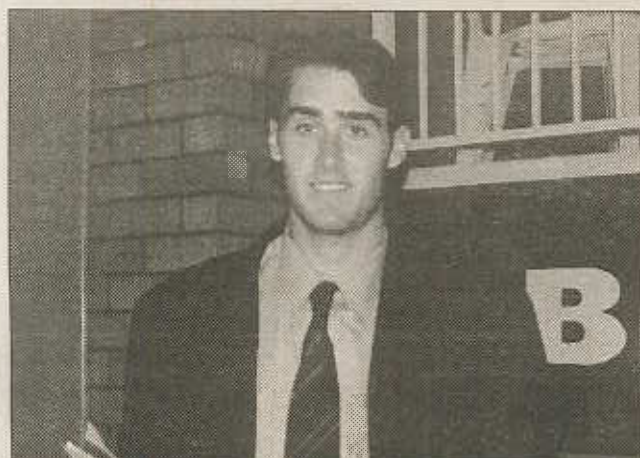
DID YOU GET THEM?



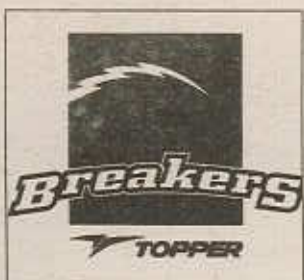
Rale Rasic (left).



Kresimir Marusic (right).



Clayton Zane (left).



Ransford Banini (right).



Elias Augerinos (left).



Daniel Allsopp (right).



NOW TRY THESE . . .



New coach?

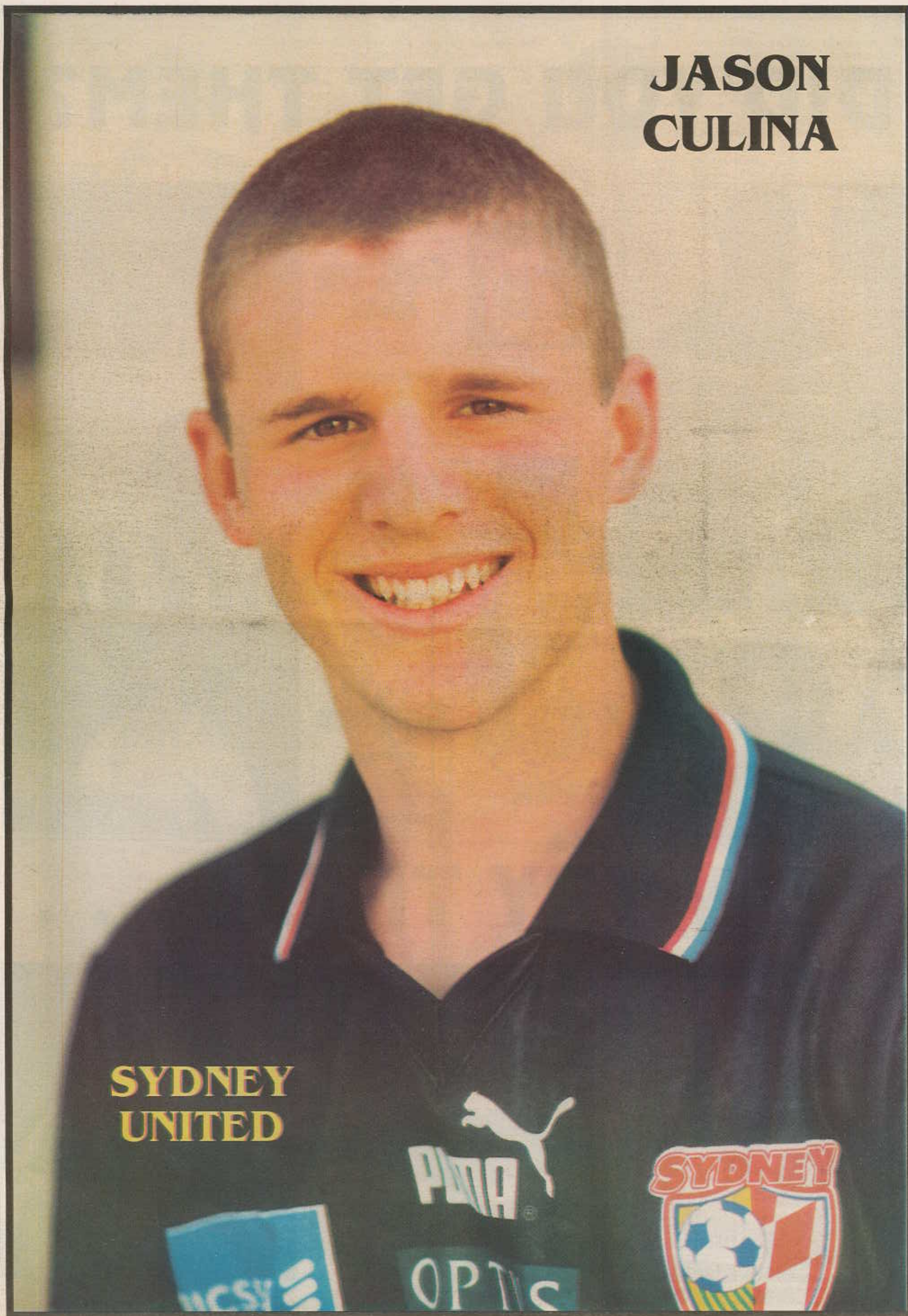


Scoring for United?



Happy Socceroo?

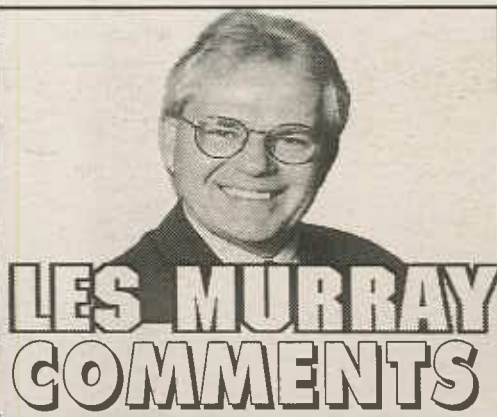
**JASON
CULINA**



DINO ZOFF



PAST MASTER



How quickly the world forgets. Helenio Herrera died recently at 81, inviting little more than the odd obituary in minor publications for one of the most important revolutionary figures in soccer's history. Younger fans will note from their history books that Herrera was the coach of Inter Milan, with whom he won two European Cups in the 1960s. Older heads with good memories will remember him as the master tactician who

perfected 'catenaccio', and had much of the football world's elite teams aping his methods.

'Catenaccio' earned notoriety for being an ultra-defensive tactical method but it was more clever than that. Herrera's system focused on the mentality of keeping opponents at bay and hitting them occasionally on the counterattack to secure a win or a draw. Inter under Herrera won many matches but very rarely by more than one odd goal. His was the first

prominent team to use a sweeper, a free defender behind defenders who tightly marked opposition strikers. His counterattacks, the 'contro piedi', relied largely on the perceptive midfield brain of Spaniard Luis Suarez and on the raiding left back Giacinto Facchetti. It was in Herrera's time that the word 'overlap' entered the football lexicon.

Herrera was roundly despised for his conquests for they ended the 'beautiful' era or Real Madrid and Benfica who, until Inter's emergence, dominated European football for ten years. Poignantly, his Inter beat both of these clubs in successive European Cup finals. But in Italy, where results are a shrine, he was admired and all other coaches followed his ways. This was the era when tactics reigned supreme, the era when doors were closed to all foreigners in Italy and Spain, when, because of that, individual player

excellence had been minimised.

'Catenaccio' had a long life in Italy, beginning to give way to new ideas only when the doors were re-opened to foreign glamour in the early 80s, although some coaches, particularly of smaller, unfashionable clubs, continue to use to this day. Italy's current national coach, who played for rivals AC Milan in the Herrera era, is known to remain a disciple of catenaccio.

Internationally, the 'catenaccio' stranglehold, dubbed 'total football', was masterminded by Dutchman Rinus Michels and sprang the era of complete player versatility, when defenders became expert creators and attackers learned to defend. It was the return of 'beautiful' football.

Romario, that wondering Brazilian genius, it seems is back in Brazil. But not in his beloved Rio. Romario has been transferred back to Brazil recently



from Spanish club Valencia in what must be the most novel transfer in history. Romario, you may recall, was forced to return to Valencia in Spain from Flamengo of Rio, where he had been on loan, because Flamengo couldn't afford his transfer fee.

But Valencia is not where Romario wanted to be and he continued to be restless and wayward. And with no Brazilian club in sight with a big enough bank balance to afford him, things looked bleak for his return home. That's when the Sao Paulo (Paulista) State Football Federation stepped in with a solution. They bought Romario's contract from Valencia for an undisclosed transfer fee and they

now intend to auction the player among the Sao Paulo clubs.

But how they will auction him is the real novelty. They plan to conduct a phone poll among the fans of Sao Paulo's biggest clubs (Corinthians, Sao Paulo, Palmeiras, Santos and Portuguesa) to determine which club gets him. With each of those phone calls landing \$5 for the Paulista, and with

charge an affordable transfer fee to the winning club!

And the real bonus: Romario will play in Sao Paulo, not in the hated rival city of Rio.

Brazil may have a chaotic and dishevelled domestic football administration, but it seems they are not short of novel ideas.



Do I hear ten million? millions likely to take part in the poll, the Federation will make a financial killing. In addition they will



Could we entice Ned Zelic back 'Sao Paulo' style?

Now, how could we bring back the restless Aurelio Vidmar or Ned Zelic to Australia ... ?

LETTERS

Continued from Page 6 IS THERE A RONALDO OUT THERE?

Dear Sir,

Like most families Christmas is seen as a good opportunity to catch up, and like many soccer families it didn't take long for soccer to enter into our conversation.

Initially our talk centred around the burning question of who would be our national coach for the next World Cup campaign, with questions like:

Q1/ Would Terry Venables want to commit to another four years?

Q2/ Would Terry Venables be re-appointed by SA, and

Q3/ If not, who would be the best replacement to do the job?

My older brother, who is rapidly gaining an interest in soccer, made a number of interesting observations.

Firstly, how Venables' performance would be viewed by Australia's soccer community.

Unfortunately some high profile soccer identities have already judged him a failure, which may unjustly influence the decision makers.

Secondly, why the NSW and Victorian Soccer Federations failed to throw

their full support behind David Hill and his board (as reported, ABSW 30/12/97 Les Murray's column), in reference to their re-appointments to Soccer Australia.

It may be implied that each of these two federations may have their own agendas in mind, rather than the overall best interests of Soccer in Australia.

The NSW and Victorian Soccer Federations need to either join with the other states' loyalty to David Hill and his board, or state publicly why they are destabilising our game.

Both should come clean. Finally, the difference between Brazilian and Aussie styles.

The obvious factor in the recent game was that world famous 'Brazilian Magic', putting Brazil on a different plateau to every other soccer nation.

I've always felt that any team facing up to Brazil will need the same calibre of players in every position, who all have the same level of passion and skill as the they have.

Further to this, many of Australia's best players

have come from European heritages and there does not appear to be any Brazilian/South American second generation players breaking through into the Soccerroo teams lately.

South American communities are relatively small, but maybe there is a Maradona waiting to be discovered here? So with the help of this paper if anyone knows of a talented Brazilian (15-18) who shows the skill that could lead them towards future Soccerroo selection, let us know by sending a profile to me via ABSW, and I will promote the player (s) and pass their details on.

Marcel Poeder,
Hurstville, NSW

Editor's note:

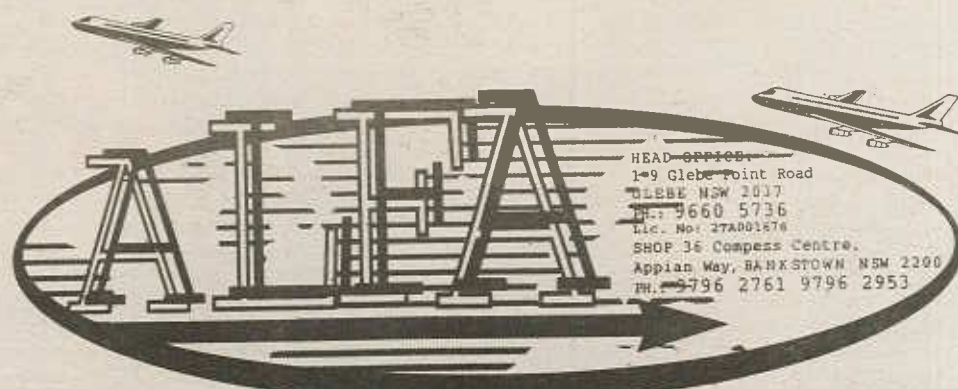
Much as it would be wonderful to find some South American 'treasures' of our own, from the youth set-up, why should we be stopping there? Our Asian opponents in the past have shown that they have the necessary skills to be able to perform at the highest levels in Australia.

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WOMEN'S WRITES

BY JANENE MAR

DEBBIE TAIT — A SAD LOSS

A week before Christmas, the Soccer community was extremely saddened to learn of the death of Debbie Tait.

Aged just nineteen, Debbie lost her fight with leukaemia and passed away on Wednesday 17 December.

During her short lifetime Debbie touched the lives of many people with her easygoing, bright and cheery personality. She loved to have a laugh, and make others laugh too.

She was the easiest person to get along with, and her popularity was evidenced by the 400 people in attendance at her funeral at St Joseph's Church, Rockdale in Sydney.

Debbie loved her Soccer

and was certainly a player of great talent. A skilful attacking midfielder she created and scored many a goal.

Her passion for the game started as a youngster playing for local club Sylvania Heights, continuing there until 1991 when she moved up into Women's State League ranks at Sutherland Shire.

1992 saw her shift to Sydney Olympic where she was a member of the First Grade team which made the WSL Finals for the ensuing three years.

That same season was also Debbie's first year of representative football, making not only state teams, but also gaining instant recognition at national level. She was selected in the



NSW Under/16 team, where she won her first Australian Championship. Her performance at the titles resulted in her being named in the Australian U/16 squad which later assembled in Canberra for a training camp at the AIS.

In the meantime, representing Met-East, Debbie was selected for NSW schoolgirls, and also went on to gain a berth in the Australian Schoolgirls side which toured New Zealand.

In season 1993 Debbie repeated her representative successes of the previous year. Again selected for NSW U/16s, she won her second nationals, and travelled to the AIS as a member of the Australian Junior Squad.

The same rewards

followed with the schoolgirls, state and Australian selection. A member of what was an awesome state team which included the likes of Joanne Peters and Michelle Watson, the NSW girls blew away the opposition in Darwin.

Debbie, however was one of several who pulled out of the subsequent Australian Schoolgirls' tour to Hong Kong, China and Taipei, due to the expense.

1994 was Debbie's last full season on the football field — and again she was a winner with her every endeavour.

Sydney Olympic finished the year as WSL premiers and champions, defeating Marconi 1-0 in what was a dream filled First Grade Grand Final at Parklea.

Deadlocked at nil-all, the extra-time period included the scoring of the goal, a broken leg, and a saved penalty.

Debbie earned herself selection into the NSW youth team at her first attempt during 1994. In the final against Queensland, she scored NSW's second goal in what ended as a 2-2 draw, before NSW claimed the title in the penalty shootout.

A couple of weeks later and Debbie travelled to Melbourne, her obvious talent also winning her a guernsey in the senior NSW state team, aged only sixteen.

The step up to senior representative ranks brought further honours, the Blues winning the championship with a 1-0 win over Victoria in the final.

Debbie had therefore represented her State at every age level over a three year period and won four out of four national championship medals — a truly significant feat.

She had still continued her success at schoolgirl level during the year, with NSW and Australian selections. The national side competing this time at home against New Zealand.

In late 1994/early 1995, Debbie suddenly fell ill and was diagnosed with leukaemia.

During periods of remission, she displayed great bravery in coming back to the game she loved,



playing WSL for Sydney Cosmos in 1996, and starting the season in 1997 with Eastern Suburbs.

Debbie will be remembered for her talents on the Soccer field, as well

as her fun-loving ways.

Debbie Tait 13/02/78 - 17/12/97.

On behalf of ABSW our sincerest condolences go out to the family of Debbie Tait.



Debbie Tait: 13/02/78 — 17/12/97.

CHALLENGE AS TOUGH AS EVER

Yes, 1997 was a big year for Australian Women's Soccer. We defeated number two ranked China — our best ever result, and this followed on from our victory over sixth ranked Sweden away from home.

There's no denying these were two truly significant wins, and certainly the culmination of much hard work, sacrifice and commitment by all concerned. The rewards have started to come to fruition, and these are achievements that deserve due recognition.

But with the dawning of a new year, we must look ahead to the tasks that lay before us. The challenge is by no means over. In reality, this challenge is probably tougher than ever. A single win over a team such as China means the expectations and targets are set even higher, and with it must increase the level of professionalism and development.

On closer study, it is evident Australia is not up to the technical ability of the leading nations. Don't forget, Australia was also walloped by

the USA and Norway during the year. We have a long way to go before we can confidently compete alongside these teams with the same presence on the ball, effectiveness in support play, and strength and consistency in possession.

If one looks at other international performances from the past year, there were a number of other upsets and unexpected results.

Not long ago considered almost invincible, the USA finally went down to Brazil recently, a team which surprised many by making the Olympic semi-finals, and which have given the US side plenty of headaches of late.

Meanwhile in October it was Germany who beat the mighty USA 3-1, breaking the Americans' thirty game unbeaten streak.

Norway played a disappointing European Championship, finishing in fifth place (the first occasion they have failed to reach the semi-finals of the event). It had become apparent that their traditional direct style of play was no longer the force of old, with opposition teams having worked out

ways to nullify their power.

The Netherlands last month also upset Germany, 1-0, in a UEFA Group three match.

Italy returned to the elite of European football, with France showing encouraging competitive talent.

North Korea came from obscurity to finish second in the Asian Championship and thus win themselves a place in the 1999 World Cup.

All this means that the gap is closing the world over. Teams once a class above all others are now having a tough time against previous minnows. As more nations pool greater resources into more professional elite programs, the rate of improvement is proving more rapid in those teams considered average or on the fringe just a short while ago.

More sophisticated training and tactical methods, plus an overall growth in numbers and funding have combined to bridge the gap and raise the standard worldwide — a most exciting prospect.

And so, it is clear the race is becoming ever harder. The rate of improvement, the continual development must be increased just to keep up, let alone come out near the top.

Australia's next step forward is the establishment of the centralised National Squad program at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. This is one huge leap, and one which is in itself creates a myriad of new, testing and unknown territories.

There are not only the footballing aspects to consider, but the associated lifestyle, social, economic and emotional factors to consider for the players fortunate enough to gain a scholarship.

Much detailed and careful planning is necessary to ensure the program runs successfully and meets all the needs of the athletes and the program alike. With the right strategies in place, Australia can look forward to meeting these new tougher challenges ahead in 1998.



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Around the Globe

ENGLAND

FA CUP 3RD ROUND

While the match between holders Chelsea and league champions Manchester United at Stamford Bridge dominates the build-up to this weekend's FA Cup third round, 20-year-old Matthew Wood has another destination in sight.

He made a round-trip of 24,000 miles to watch his non-league team Emley play West Ham at Upton Park, even though the 10,000-1 outsiders had virtually no hope of surviving the tie.

Matthew, a budding cricketer playing in Wellington, New Zealand, grew up in the Yorkshire pit village of Emley near Huddersfield and just could not miss the biggest day in the tiny club's history.

"As soon as I heard the draw I knew I couldn't miss this match," he said.

"I've been watching Emley since I have been able to crawl."

His trip involves two 12,000 mile flights and he will be joining 2,000 other Emley fans for a match that captures all the magic of the cup, as does the tie between Chelsea and United on Sunday.

Minor League Stevenage eliminated first division Swindon while Coventry stunned Liverpool by winning 3-1 at Anfield to share the English FA Cup third round honours on Saturday.

Stevenage triumphed 2-1 away in gale-force winds while Coventry, who beat Manchester United in the league last week, fully deserved their stunning success at the once impregnable home of Liverpool.

West Ham needed an 82nd minute goal to overcome the part-timers of Emley 2-1 at Upton Park and Aston Villa needed a last-gasp equaliser to draw 2-2 at Portsmouth, bottom of the first division.

Arsenal were held 0-0 at home by Port Vale, who have lost their last six first division games, but there were no such problems for premier league sides Blackburn, Leeds and Leicester, who all hit four goals in easy victories.

In two other clashes involving top flight clubs, Derby beat Southampton 2-0 while Barnsley defeated Bolton 1-0.

THE F.A. CUP



Arsenal	0	Port Vale	0
Barnsley	1	Bolton Wand'rs	0
Barnard 26			
Blackburn Rov	4	Wigan Athletic	2
McGibbon 20og		Lee 62	
Gallacher 37,60		Lowe 68	
Sherwood 48			
Bournemouth	P	Huddersfield T	P
Bristol Rovers	1	Ipswich Town	1
Beadle 36		Stockwell 71	
Cardiff City	1	Oldham Athletic	0
Fowler 18			
Charlton Athletic	4	Nottingham For	1
Robinson 38		Van Hooijdonk 56	
Brown 42			
Leaburn 64			
Mendonca 75			
Cheltenham T	P	Reading	P
Crewe Alexandra	1	Birmingham City	2
Rivers 31		Furlong 22p,55	
Crystal Palace	2	Scunthorpe Utd	0
Emblen 45,87			
Darlington	P	W'hamp Wnd'rs	P

Derby County	2	Southampton	0
Baiano 68p			
Powell 73			
Grimsby Town	3	Norwich City	0
Leeds United	4	Oxford United	0
Radebe 17			
Hasselbaink 45p			
Kewell 71,72			
Leicester City	4	Northampton T	0
Marshall 17			
Parker 26p			
Savage 53			
Cottee 58			
Liverpool	1	Coventry City	3
Redknapp 7		Huckerby 45	
		Dublin 62	
		Telfer 87	
Manchester City	2	Bradford City	0
Rosler 35			
Brown 42			
Peterborough U	P	Walsall	P
Portsmouth	2	Aston Villa	2
Foster 6,40		Staunton 41	
		Grayson 88	
Preston NE	1	Stockport County	2
Ashcroft 71p		Angell 30,48	
QPR	2	Middlesbrough	2
Spencer 6		Hignett 33	
Gallen 75		Mustoe 63	
Rotherham Utd	1	Sunderland	5
Garner 68		Phillips 5p,55,72,76	
		Quinn 85	
Sheffield United	1	Bury	1
Fjortoft 65		Gray 7	
Swindon Town	1	Stevenage Bor	2
Walters 6		Soloman 23	
		Grazzioli 65	
Watford	1	Sheffield Wed	1
Kennedy 65		Alexandersson 64	
WBA	P	Stoke City	P
West Ham Utd	2	Emley	1
Lampard 4		David 56	
Hartson 82			

FIXTURES FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 4

1998

Chelsea	v	Manchester United
Everton	v	Newcastle United
Hereford United	v	Tranmere Rovers
Wimbledon	v	Wrexham

FIXTURE FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 5 1998

Tottenham Hotsp	v	Fulham
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DIVISION TWO

Blackpool	P	Bristol City	P									
Chesterfield	0	Brentford	0									
Gillingham	2	Burnley	0									
Butler 10												
Smith 68												
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	25	8	3	1	21	10	8	4	1	18	6	55
Bristol C	25	11	1	1	27	9	5	3	4	17	11	52
Northampton	25	8	3	2	19	10	2	6	4	11	11	39
Grimsby	24	6	4	2	17	7	4	4	4	14	12	38
Bristol R	25	5	1	6	19	22	5	6	2	18	16	37
Fulham	25	7	5	1	16	7	3	2	7	14	19	37
Che'field	26	6	6	1	15	9	2	7	4	8	10	37
Oldham	24	8	4	0	26	12	1	5	6	12	18	36
York	25	8	1	3	18	10	1	8	4	14	19	36
Millwall	24	5	4	4	17	15	5	1	5	12	15	35
Gillingham	26	7	3	3	19	14	2	4	7	13	23	34
Wrexham	24	5	6	1	18	12	3	4	5	13	15	34
Blackpool	25	7	4	2	21	15	2	2	8	13	24	33
B'mouth	25	6	5	2	16	8	2	4	6	15	21	33
Preston	25	6	2	4	14	9	3	3	7	17	18	32
Wycombe	25	5	6	1	17	11	2	3	8	15	25	30
Walsall	24	6	4	2	16	8	2	2	8	10	21	30
Wigan	24	6	3	3	25	18	2	2	8	11	19	29
Luton	25	3	3	7	18	27	4	5	3	11	11	29
Southend	26	5	5	4	18	19	2	1	9	12	29	27
Plymouth	25	4	4	4	20	18	1	6	6	10	18	25

Brentford	26	5	4	3	19	14	0	5	9	7	29	24
Carlisle	25	3	3	6	10	18	3	2	8	19	25	23
Burnley	25	3	7	2	13	12	1	2	10	10	24	21

DIVISION THREE

Colchester United	1	Hartlepool Utd	2
Exeter City	P	Barnet	P
Macclesfield Town	P	Brighton	P
Mansfield Town	3	Rochdale	0
Notts County	P	Hull City	P
Scarborough	P	Torquay United	P
Shrewsbury Town	P	Lincoln City	P

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Notts City	25	6	4	2	20	13	8	4	1	20	11	50
Peterboro'	25	8	3	2	27	11	3	7	2	18	13	43
Lincoln C	25	5	5	2	14	11	6	4	3	13	14	42
Rotherham	25	7	3	3	25	21	5	5	3	18	15	41
Barnet	25	6	3	3	22	12	5	2	5	16	18	41
Hartlepool	26	7	6	0	24	11	2	7	4	14	18	40
Exeter	25	5	6	2	18	12	5	4	3	18	15	40
Chester	25	9	4	0	22	5	3	0	9	14	26	40
Torquay	25	7	2	3	20	13	3	6	4	15	20	38
Scarboro'	24	8	1	3	22	13	3	3	6	14	21	37
Leyton	25	7	3	3	22	10	3	4	5	11	12	37
Maccles'ld	24	9	3	0	21	6	0	6	6	12	21	36
Colchester	25	7	3	3	22	15	2	4	6	18	24	34
Scunthorpe	24	4	4	4	14	15	2	6	5	16	16	33
Cambridge	25	6	4	2	21	15	1	6	6	13	18	31
Shrewsbury	24	7	0	5	20	17	1	6	5	16	20	30
Mansfield	25	5	6	2	25	17	2	3	7	9	14	30
Rochdale	26	8	1	3	22	7	1	1	12	8	27	29
Cardiff	24	2	9	2	12	13	3	5	3	11	11	29
Darlington	23	6	5	1	22	13	0	3	8	7	21	26
Hull	25	5	3	4	24	21	1	1	11	13	28	22
Swansea	25	3	4	5	9	11	3	0	10	14	29	22
Brighton	25	1	5	7	11	20	3	4	5	11	15	21
Doncaster	24	1	3	7	7	26	0	3	10	9	39	9

SCOTLAND

PREMIER LEAGUE

Aberdeen	1	Dundee Utd	0
Windass 26			
Dunfermline	0	St Johnstone	0
Kilmarnock	4	Motherwell	1
Wright 8,33		Coyle 24	
Mitchell 44			
Roberts 88			
Celtic	2	Rangers	0
Burley 66			
Lambert 85			
Hearts	2	Hibernian	2
Fulton 6,10		Walker 51	
		McGinlay 67	



P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Rangers	20	8	2	0	33	11	4	4	2	18	12	42
Celtic	20	7	1	2	22	5	6	1	3	14	8	41
Hearts	20	7	1	2	25	16	6	1	3	19	10	41
Kilmarnock	20	5	1	4	12	14	3	3	4	10	20	28
St J's stone	20	4	2	4	10	13	3	3	4	11	13	26
Dundee U	20	4	3	2	16	7	2	3	6	14	24	24
Dunf'line	20	2	5	4	12	17	3	1	5	10	21	21
M'well	20	2	2	5	9	13	3	2	6	15	23	19

DIVISION ONE

Airdrie	P	Partick T	P
Dundee	1	Raith Rovers	1
Hamilton	P	Ayr United	P
St Mirren	P	G Morton	P
Stirling Albion	0	Falkirk	6

Crabbe 12
Keith 26
McAllister 38
Craig 45p
Moss 59
Hagen 70

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Dundee	20	4	4	3	12	7	7	2	0	17	3	39
Falkirk	20	5	1	3	13	12	6	2	3	21	16	36
Raith	20	5	2	2	12	5	4	3	4	16	15	32
Hamilton	19	4	3	3	10	11	4	2	3	16	12	29
Airdrie	19	4	5	1	13	10	2	4	3	7	12	27
Ayr	19	4	1	5	17	14	2	3	4	7	13	22
St Mirren	19	4	2	3	12	12	2	2	6	10	16	22
Partick	19	2	2	5	16	20	2	5	3	10	12	19
Morton	19	2	2	5	10	16	3	2	5	12	13	19
Stirling	20	2	5	4	13	21	2	2	5	12	16	19

DIVISION THREE

Alloa	1	Ross County	0
Tristall 11			

P W D L F A W D L F A Pts

Arbroath	19	7	1	2	25	12	5	1	3	16	10	38
Alloa	18	5	0	3	18	9	7	0	3	20	11	36
Ross Cty	19	5	1	3	26	13	5	3	2	17	11	34
E Stirling	19	7	0	3	21	11	4	1	4	9	14	34
Albion	18	5	1	1	13	5	3	2	6	17	27	27
Q's Park	19	4	2	4	17	15	3	3	3	10	9	26
Berwick	18	3	3	4	15	17	3	1	4	10	14	22
Dumbarton	18	0	4	4	7	13	4	2	4	19	20	18
Montrose	18	2	2	6	12	19	2	2	4	11	25	16
C'beath	18	2	1	7	5	19	1	0	7	4	18	10

By STUART JONES

Weird & Wonderful

1948 — 1949

In their golden jubilee season, former Southern League team Portsmouth won the First Division title.

Undeclared at Fratton Park 'Pompey' finished five points clear of perennial runners-up, Manchester United.

Meanwhile, Derby County improved one position to finish third, failing to make second spot on goal percentage. Newcastle were a point behind with Arsenal a further three points adrift in fifth place.

Down at the bottom it was much tighter, with four teams finishing within a point of each other. Before the final week of games the standings were:

Middlesbrough 33
Huddersfield 32
Sheffield United 32
Preston 31

Despite a 2-0 away win at Anfield, Preston were relegated because Huddersfield won 1-0 at home to Manchester City while 'Boro drew 1-1 away at Villa. Sheffield United were bottom thanks to a 0-0 result at home to Newcastle.

Fulham took the Division Two title, a point clear of promoted West Brom. A 1-0 loss to Chesterfield on the final day meant Southampton missed out on promotion, and at the bottom Lincoln City finished well back. The other spot for relegation was not so clear cut and in the end it was Nottingham Forest who were handed it.

Hull City and Swansea Town were clear winners of the Third Division North and South respectively, with Bradford City and Crystal Palace ending last.

Portsmouth and Manchester United also made the semi-finals of the FA Cup, however both were tumbled out by midlands sides. Wolves defeated United 1-0 after drawing 1-1 in the first game, and Leicester's scoresheet read 3 to 'Pompey's' 1.

99,500 came to watch this midlands derby with Wolves victorious 3-1. The late, great, Billy Wright was presented with the FA Cup after Pye (2) and Smyth had contributed his team's goals.

With four new members, the Southern League boasted 22 sides. Of Chingford, Hastings, Tonbridge, and Kidderminster

Harriers, it was the Harriers who finished highest, ending in tenth spot.

Further up the table it was a tight affair. Coming into the final day Gillingham were a point clear of Chelmsford, who needed victory against Torquay Reserves to have any chance. Chelmsford prevailed but Gillingham also won, 3-2, over Colchester.

The Southern League Cup was turned into a knock-out competition; in the final Yeovil won by three goals to one over Colchester. For the Colchester boys it was their second consecutive loss at the final hurdle, while Yeovil's previous three starts in this fixture had seen them lose as well.

North of the border, and Rangers returned to the top of the table, once again winning Division A. It was close, with Dundee just a point behind. In fact, coming into the last matches on April 1 Dundee were ahead. However, they lost 4-1 away at Falkirk while Rangers won by the same scoreline at Albion Rovers.

At the bottom Morton finished second last on 22 points but it was Albion Rovers who had a shocker of a season, winning only three games, finishing with eight points from 30 games, with their leaky defence conceding 105 goals.

Division B saw four teams finish within two points of each other. Stirling Albion and Airdrie, having completed their fixtures, left Raith and Dunfermline to play the final match.

A draw would have seen Albion as champions and Airdrie go up, or a win for either side would have meant they take out Division B and go up with the Stirling side.

Raith won 4-0 at home and so up they went up as champions with Stirling Albion runners-up. At the other end East Stirling were the recipients of the wooden spoon.

Meanwhile in the Cup competitions Rangers defeated Raith in the League Cup Final, 2-0, and then went on to beat East Fife in the Scottish Cup Final 3-0.

In achieving this success, they were the first team to do the domestic 'treble' in Britain, and it certainly made amends for a disappointing season the year earlier.

ENGLAND LEAGUE TABLES

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portsmouth	42	18	3	0	52	12	7	5	9	32	30	58
Man Utd	42	11	7	3	40	20	10	4	7	37	24	53
Derby Co	42	17	2	2	48	22	5	7	9	26	33	53
N'castle U	42	12	5	4	35	29	8	7	6	35	27	52
Arsenal	42	13	5	3	51	18	5	8	8	23	26	49
Wolves	42	13	5	3	48	19	4	7	10	31	47	46
Man City	42	10	8	3	28	21	5	7	9	19	30	45
Sunderland	42	8	10	3	27	19	5	7	9	22	39	43
Charlton A	42	10	5	6	38	31	5	7	9	25	36	42
Aston Villa	42	10	6	5	40	36	6	4	11	20	40	42
Stoke C	42	14	3	4	43	24	2	6	13	23	44	41
Liverpool	42	5	10	6	25	18	8	4	9	28	25	40
Chelsea	42	10	6	5	43	27	2	8	11	26	41	38
Bolton W	42	10	4	7	43	32	4	6	11	16	36	38
Burnley	42	10	6	5	27	19	2	8	11	16	31	38
Blackpool	42	8	8	5	24	25	3	8	10	30	42	38
B'ham C	42	9	7	5	19	10	2	8	11	17	28	37
Everton	42	12	5	4	33	25	1	6	14	8	38	37
M'brough	42	10	6	5	37	23	1	6	14	9	34	34
H'field T	42	6	7	8	19	24	6	3	12	21	45	34
Preston NE	42	8	6	7	36	36	3	5	13	26	39	33
Sheffield U	42	8	9	4	32	25	3	2	16	25	53	33



DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fulham	42	16	4	1	52	14	8	5	8	25	23	57
WBA	42	16	3	2	47	16	8	5	8	22	23	56
South'ton	42	16	4	1	48	10	7	5	9	21	26	55
Cardiff C	42	14	4	3	45	21	5	9	7	17	26	51
T'ham H	42	14	4	3	50	18	3	12	6	22	26	50
C'field	42	9	7	5	24	18	6	10	5	27	27	47
Wt Ham U	42	13	5	3	38	23	5	5	11	18	35	46
S'field W	42	12	6	3	36	17	3	7	11	27	39	43
Barnsley	42	10	7	4	40	18	4	5	12	22	43	40
Luton T	42	11	6	4	32	16	3	6	12	23	41	40
Grimsby T	42	10	5	6	44	28	5	5	11	28	48	40
Bury	42	12	5	4	41	23	5	1	15	26	53	40
QPR	42	11	4	6	31	26	3	7	11	13	36	39
B'burn R	42	12	5	4	41	23	3	3	15	12	40	38
Leeds U	42	11	6	4	36	21	1	7	13	19	42	37
Coventry C	42	12	3	6	35	20	3	4	14	20	44	37
Bradford	42	8	8	5	37	26	5	3	13	28	52	37
Brentford	42	7	10	4	28	21	4	4	13	14	32	36
Leicester C	42	6	10	5	41	38	4	6	11	21	41	36
P'mouth A	42	11	4	6	33	25	1	8	12	16	39	36
N'ham F	42	9	6	6	22	14	5	1	15	28	40	35
Lincoln C	42	6	7	8	31	35	2	5	14	22	56	28

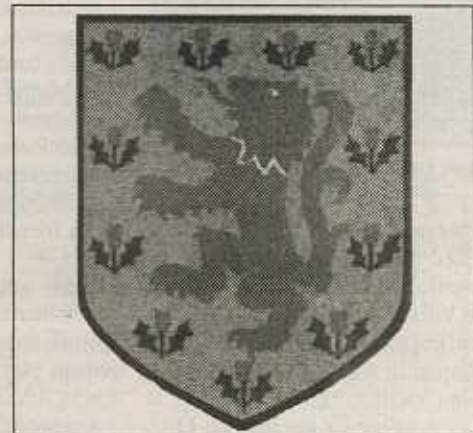
SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Gillingham 62, Chelmsford City 61, Merthyr Tydfil 60, Colchester United 52, Worcester City 51, Dartford 51, Gravesend & Northfleet 49, Yeovil Town 47, Cheltenham Town 47, Kidderminster Harriers 44, Exeter City (Res) 43, Hereford United 40, Bath City 38, Hastings United 38, Torquay United (Res) 37, Lovells Athletic 36, Guildford City 36, Gloucester City 34, Barry Town 34, Tonbridge 25, Chingford Town 21, Bedford Town 18.

SCOTLAND DIVISION A

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	30	20	6	4	63	32	46
Dundee	30	20	5	5	71	48	45
Hibernian	30	17	5	8	75	52	39
East Fife	30	16	3	11	64	46	35
Falkirk	30	12	8	10	70	54	32
Celtic	30	12	7	11	48	40	31
T Lanark	30	13	5	12	56	52	31
Hearts	30	12	6	12	64	54	30
St Mirren	30	13	4	13	51	47	30
Queen of South	30	11	8	11	47	53	30
Partick T	30	9	9	12	50	63	27
Motherwell	30	10	5	15	44	49	25
Aberdeen	30	7	11	12	39	48	25
Clyde	30	9	6	15	50	67	24
Morton	30	7	8	15	39	51	22
Albion R	30	3	2	25	30	105	8



DIVISION B

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Raith R	30	20	2	8	80	44	42
Stirling A	30	20	2	8	71	47	42
Airdrie	30	16	9	5	73	42	41
Dunfermline A	40	16	9	5	80	58	41
Queen's Park	30	14	7	9	66	49	35
St Johnstone	30	14	4	12	58	51	32
Arbroath	30	12	8	10	62	56	32
Dundee U	30	10	7	13	60	67	27
Ayr U	30	10	7	13	51	70	27
Hamilton A	30	9	8	13	48	57	26
Kilmarnock	30	9	7	14	58	61	25
Stenhousemuir	30	8	8	14	50	54	24
Cowdenbeath	30	9	5	16	53	58	23
Alloa	30	10	3	17	42	85	23
Dumbarton	30	8	6	16	52	79	22
E Stirling	30	6	6	18	38	67	18



Around Europe the Champions were:

- Austria: FK Austria (Cup: FK Austria)
- Belgium: RSC Anderlecht
- Bulgaria: Levski Sofia (Cup: Dinamo Sofia)
- France: Stade de Reims (Cup: Racing Club Paris)
- East Germany: ZSG Halle (Cup: Waggonbau Dessau)
- West Germany: VfR Mannheim
- Holland: SVV Schiedam (Cup: Quick Nijmegen)
- Italy: AC Torino
- Poland: Gwardia Krakow
- Portugal: Sporting CP (Cup: Benfica)
- Romania: ICO Oradea (Cup: CSCA Bucuresti)
- Russia: Dynamo Mosvka (Cup: Torpedo Mosvka)
- Spain: CF Barcelona (Cup: Valencia CF)
- Sweden: Malmo FF (Cup: AIK Stockholm)
- Switzerland: FC Lugano (Cup: Servette FC Geneve)



SOUNESS SIGNINGS

Benfica coach Graeme Souness made his second major purchase when he signed Ukrainian midfielder Sergei Kandorov for a million dollars from Israeli side Maccabi Haifa.

The 25-year-old Kandorov, who signed a three-and-a-half year contract, looks likely to join Souness' other recent signing Czech Republic star Karel Poborsky, who completed his move from Premiership side Manchester United, in the line-up for the vital clash with fellow giants Porto.



Karel Poborsky: Set to star in the Portuguese league.

However, Souness has failed in a renewed attempt to sign Yugoslav international Savo Milosevic from Aston Villa.

Benfica sources said that Souness had hoped to secure the 24-year-old Serbian striker before Portugal's transfer deadline for signing non-EEC players.

The former Liverpool and Rangers manager first tried to sign Milosevic soon after taking over at Benfica last month, but he was unable to match Villa's \$7.1 million valuation of the former Partizan Belgrade striker.

He retained an interest because of Milosevic's belief that he will become a free agent in the summer. But Villa have always insisted they have a legally-binding option to extend his contract for another year, which has now been ratified by the Premier League.

BULGARIA TO PLAY ARGENTINA

The 1994 World Cup semi-finalists Bulgaria will play fellow World Cup finalists and dual World Cup winners Argentina in a friendly as a build up towards the 1998 Finals.



Bulgaria, who beat defending champions Germany on their way to the 1994 semi-finals, will play the 1978 and 1986 champions in Argentina on March 11.

They see Argentina as the ideal opposition as they have been drawn with South American side Paraguay in Group D along with Spain and Nigeria — in what is popularly known as the 'Group of Death'.

The Argentinians are in Group H with first-time qualifiers Croatia, Jamaica and Japan.

One Argentine paper on hearing this draw, stated that 'God must be Argentine!'.

KAREMBEU'S MOVE CONFIRMED

French international Christian Karembau has finally joined Real Madrid, Spanish state television TVE reported.

Karembau, 27, was reported to have signed a contract which will bind him to Real Madrid until the end of the 2001-2002 season.

Club President Lorenzo Sanz said the transfer fee from Italian side Sampdoria was 500 million pesetas (\$3.33 million) and a friendly match between the two sides.

Sanz added that he expected Karembau to start training with the Spanish champions on January 5 and perhaps play in the local derby match against Atletico Madrid on January 10.

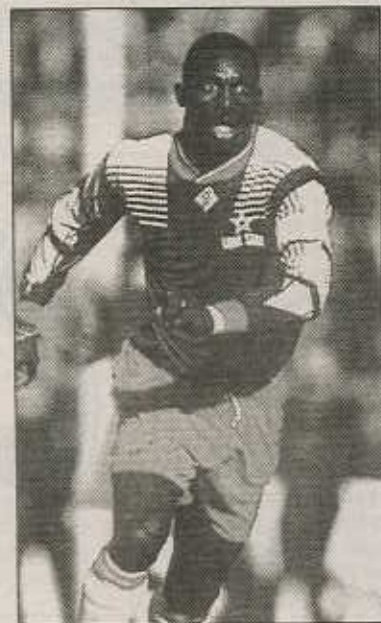
Karembau's move brings to an end 18 months of protracted negotiations for the defensive midfielder.

He first said on June 13, 1996, that he was looking to join Real Madrid.

This season he has not played for Sampdoria who sidelined him in September because of the transfer dispute.

WEAH UNDERGOES SURGERY

Former world soccer player of the year George Weah had



George Weah: His back operation was a success.

successful surgery in Milan for a herniated disk, Italian news agency ANSA reported.

The AC Milan striker is expected to be out of action for about two months, after the operation for the injury between the fourth and fifth vertebrae of his back.

SPARTA OPENS DOOR

Sparta Prague said they would not stop coach Jozef Chovanec moving to the national team, paving the way for final talks between Chovanec and the Czech football union.

Sparta Prague general director Viktor Haber told the daily Mlada Fronta Dnes that Chovanec, who has led Sparta to a 10-point lead in the Czech first division at the winter break, would decide on the move by the end of the year.

"Everything lies with Chovanec. If he has an interest in leaving, it will be a loss for us, but we will find some kind of agreement on his exit. For him it is the chance of a lifetime," Haber said.

The Slovak-born Chovanec, a stalwart defender for the former Czechoslovakia, said earlier this week he was not sure whether the Prague club would let him go.

Dusan Uhrin announced his decision to stand down as team coach after the Czech Republic beat Uruguay 1-0 to clinch the Confederations' Cup third place in mid-December after taking the side to an unexpected runners-up spot at the 1996 European Championships, but they failed to qualify for next year's World Cup in France after a series of dismal performances.

Uhrin will join the Dubai-based Al Nassr club this month on a six-month contract.

CARLOS ALBERTO LIVID

Former Brazil captain Carlos Alberto Torres lashed out after being sacked as Botafogo coach, accusing club directors of being dishonest and his replacement "unethical".

Torres was livid after Gilson Nunes, who has taken his job, gave a news conference in which he confirmed he had been appointed the new coach.

He rushed to Botafogo's headquarters and learned at a meeting with club president Jose Luis Rolim that his short and stormy three-month reign was over.

"They're all bad characters," said Torres, captain of Brazil's legendary 1970 World Cup team. "With these people, it couldn't be any different. They are dishonest."

He added: "I wish him (Nunes) all the best, even though he's unethical."

Torres also accused Brazil coach Mario Zagallo of being involved in the decision, saying he had been consulted by Rolim earlier this month during the Confederations' Cup in Saudi Arabia where, he said, Rolim was a member of the delegation.

Zagallo was not available for comment but Rolim replied: "Zagallo is our friend but he had nothing to do with

this."

Torres took over as Botafogo coach in October after a run of six games without a win had left the team near the Brazilian championship relegation zone.

He set the side on a winning run which saw them climb up the table and they only narrowly missed out on a place in the last eight of the tournament.

But he was involved in several controversial incidents.

He launched a furious outburst after his team had a goal disallowed during a 2-1 win away to Santos. "Now you see why Santos never lose here," he fumed.

A similar attack on referees and the Brazilian Football Confederation came after his team were held to a 0-0 draw at home by Parana, a result which ended their dreams of making the last eight.

Brazil's so-called 'dance of the coaches' has continued in full swing since the championship ended just over one week ago.

Last week, Vanderley Luxemburgo left Santos to join Corinthians and was replaced by former Brazil goalkeeper Emerson Leao from Atletico Mineiro.

UNITED AGAINST DRUGS

A combined Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid XI beat a Spanish All Stars XI 4-3 (half-time 1-0) in an anti-drugs exhibition match at the Bernabeu Stadium.

Scorers:

Real-Atletico: Raul 4, Suker 58, Morientes 68, Juninho 77

All Stars: Minambres 70, Pompei 88, Pauleta 90.

Attendance: 50,000

Well played to all concerned.



Juninho: Did his bit for the anti-drugs cause.

THE MIND GAMES BEGIN

Brazil's coach Mario Zagallo said he was not confident of defending their World Cup title next year in France because World Cup finals in Europe were "always very difficult."

The 69-year-old Zagallo, who has

won four World Cups either as a player or in a coaching capacity with Brazil, said that playing in a European climate was far more difficult for South American teams despite the fact Brazil won the 1958 World Cup in Sweden.



"The Europeans will do anything to stop us from winning our fifth title," Zagallo said.

Although Zagallo, who coached Brazil to the 1970 title and was a technical adviser when they won in 1994, said that only Argentina and his team of the five South American sides had a chance of winning the title and that there were five European teams who had a real chance.

Zagallo, who played in the World Cup winning sides of 1958 and 1962, said that he feared England, Germany, Italy, France and Spain — adding that the African sides were too unpredictable for him to pass judgement on.

"You never know how they are going to play from one day to the next. If they are on their game like Nigeria were in the Olympic semi-final (the Africans beat Brazil 4-3) then they can beat anybody but in general they are not consistent enough," he said.

Brazil, who have been drawn in Group A with Morocco, Scotland and Norway, are heavy favourites to lift the trophy for the fifth time after winning the Copa America and the Confederations Cup in Saudi Arabia this year.

Who is kidding who?

PRESIDENT MARADONA?

And finally, we can confidently say that the rather unusual idea of having Diego Maradona take over the presidency of his former Italian club Napoli, has been treated with scorn in the Southern Italian media and by the club itself.

However, with the struggling Serie A club in serious trouble, and Serie B football next year a distinct possibility, the club's director of football, Salvatore Bagni, has left a window of opportunity open by saying that in a year's time "it could be considered."

So there you have it!



President Maradona: May yet happen?

Italian Affair

By Joe Russo

DIEGO'S BOARDROOM MANOEUVRING

The most interesting news in Italy this week has been the announcement that Diego Maradona wishes to return to Napoli — this time as club president.

Many would say that this is just another Maradona publicity stunt, but there is an old saying that 'where there is smoke, there is fire' and it might just apply in this case.

There is no doubt that Maradona is still worshipped in Naples. His seven year playing stint there (1984-1991) brought the club its only two scudettos, in 1987 and 1990.

Maradona was one of the best things to ever happen in the Southern Italian city. Neapolitans will certainly never forget him



Diego Maradona: The Napoli fans have not forgotten him.

and you can still see photos of him in many of the city's cafes and bars.

Despite off-field turbulence in recent years, the people of Naples would be prepared to forgive everything just to have their idol back in one way or another.

The club is currently last on the Serie A ladder and looks destined for relegation. This can only add fuel to the fire as fans are longing for the past glory days of the Maradona era.

Diego has also stated that he will only return to the club if current President Corrado Ferlaino — his sworn enemy — leaves. This is exactly what many supporters of Napoli have been calling for.

Maradona is certainly an opportunist and there could be no more opportune moment for him to raise his head again in Naples. With fans calling for Ferlaino to go, how appropriate is it then for the city's idol to propose himself as an alternative?

However there is one problem Maradona must overcome. Ferlaino has stated that the club is not for sale and that he, under no circumstances, will go. Sorry Diego, for the moment your aspirations must be put on hold.

39 AND STILL GOING STRONG

If prizes were given out for Serie A longevity then surely Piacenza defender Pietro Vierchowod would be the winner. He will be 39 in April and still plays week-in-week-out in the Serie A.

He has done this since 1980/81 when he played for Como, however he made his professional debut back in 1976 for them in

the Serie B.

In 1981/82 he played for Fiorentina, 1982/83 Roma then followed by a 12 year stint at Sampdoria. In 1995/96 he played for Juventus, 96/97 AC Milan and this year at Piacenza.

He has also played for the Italy on 45 occasions (including two World Cups 1982, 1986) and believe it or not, even scored two goals for Italy. As 1998 begins, Pietro we salute you and your wonderful longevity.

MILAN'S MACCABI CHRISTMAS



During the festive season break, many clubs still trained as usual, only resting on Christmas day. AC Milan as always were somewhat more adventurous and headed for Israel. A friendly game against a combined Haifa side was their order of the day.

LIPPI BRILLIANT, SAYS ANSALDI

Marconi's injured defender Mario Ansaldi played for Cesena in the Serie A back in 1989/90 and 90/91. Those days Cesena were coached by, none other than ... Marcello Lippi.

It is interesting to talk to Ansaldi about exactly what he was like as a coach.

In a word, "brilliant", is the answer.

Lippi's training sessions were always innovative — he was willing to try things all the time. Lippi, like many other coaches in the Serie A, dedicated a lot of time to the defence. He would also allow flamboyant attackers the freedom to express themselves once in the opponent's side of the field.

Lippi also emphasised pace — quick counter-attacks being the order of the day, as well as getting the ball in the opponent's half as quickly as possible.

Marcello Lippi is today arguably one of the best football coaches in the world — he wouldn't be at the helm of Juventus if he wasn't. Of course he had, prior to joining Juve, stints at Napoli and Atalanta.

Lippi is currently in his fourth year at Juventus and so far has achieved:

Two Italian Championships, one Champions' League Cup, one Champions' League final, one UEFA Cup final, one Italian Cup, one Intercontinental Cup and a partridge in a pear tree.

And by the way, Juventus are also looking good this season. No surprise really.

A.S. ROMA AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Those lucky enough to have access to the Internet, and be a supporter of Roma, can access all the latest about the club in its wonderful new site at www.asromacalcio.com.

For those who don't know, calcio means football in Italian. The site has been operating for about two months and you can even ask the players and coach questions. Whether or not you will get a reply is another thing!

AZZURI ON SHOW

A future date to remember is January 28, when the Italian national team, the 'Azzuri' play Slovakia in a friendly in the Sicilian city of Catania.

DON'T FORGET ROBERTO

Memo: National coach Cesare Maldini.

Re: Roberto Baggio

In a recent interview the little genius stated that his dream for 1998 is to once again play in the World Cup. It would take a brave man to leave him at home ...



Roberto Baggio: The national coach appears to have forgotten him.

FIXTURES FOR SERIE A:

Bari — Atalanta
Brescia — Fiorentina
Empoli — Bologna
Juventus — Vicenza
Lazio — Lecce
Milan — Roma
Piacenza — Inter
Sampdoria — Parma
Udinese — Napoli

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UK STORIES

By MICKY BROCK

IT HAPPENED THIS WEEK ...

VENABLES FIGHTS FOR POMPEY

Terry Venables has pledged his immediate future to the fight for control of Portsmouth.

The former England coach, owner of a 51 per cent shareholding at Fratton Park, attended his first match in three months when 'Pompey' beat Queens Park Rangers on Boxing Day.



Terry Venables.

He is involved in a bitter power struggle with fellow shareholder Martin Gregory, whose family had agreed to sell their controlling interest to Venables for two dollars last February.

Gregory claims he has now withdrawn the offer, but Venables insists he remains in control of Portsmouth.

Venables, whose duties with the Australian national side have kept him away from the club since early October, said: "I've only just got back and I'm keen to get things sorted out as quickly as possible. Martin Gregory is on holiday and there are things which need to be resolved. As soon as he gets back in the New Year we will have a meeting to thrash things out."

JUVE COACH TO GLASGOW?

Juventus coach Marcello Lippi will not be joining Rangers, despite claims from their Italian defender Lorenzo Amoroso that he was the Scottish club's No.1 choice to replace Walter Smith.

Amoroso, yet to make a first-team appearance at Ibrox after his \$8 million move from Fiorentina, was quoted in an



Italian newspaper saying that a lucrative four year contract was already in place for Lippi.

But Rangers chairman David Murray dismissed the report as nonsense. "It is the first I have heard of it," he said.

"I have not spoken to the man. Let's face facts. I don't think the manager of Juventus would, with all respect, want to come and manage a club in Scotland.

"I cannot imagine why Amoroso has thought to mention this matter. He hasn't been here for the past three months, so what would he know."

Murray intends to step up his search for a successor to Smith, who retires at the end of the season, with former Sweden coach Tommy Svensson understood to be in the frame.

Smith is hoping to bow out in style, having taken Rangers to a record tenth successive title, and victory against Celtic, would undoubtedly strengthen their



championship ambitions.

Captain Richard Gough looks set to reclaim his central defensive slot after missing the last two games with a niggling hamstring injury.

ZOHAR LEAVING PALACE

Crystal Palace and Israeli international midfielder Itzik Zohar is to return to Israel and join Maccabi Haifa.

Maccabi Haifa president, Yaacov Shahar, said in an interview on Israeli radio that Zohar would join the club until the end of the season, although financial terms had not yet been finalised.

"The moment Itzik decided he preferred to play rather than warm the bench of an English club, we threw the idea at him. He did not turn us down and I hope we will be able to finalise a deal," Shahar said.

Zohar was due to be part of a combined Haifa side which was

playing AC Milan later on Sunday. Shahar said he would officially join Maccabi when the league season resumes on Jan 24.

The player has also played in Europe for Belgium's Antwerp, was signed by Palace at the start of the season, although he has spent most of his time out of the line-up.

On the few occasions that he has played he has failed to impress, and in the 1-1 premier league home draw with Southampton he missed a penalty after coming on as substitute.

COLLYMORE CHARGED

England and Aston Villa striker Stan Collymore has been charged with assault, the Press Association has reported.

The P.A., quoting police sources, said the 26-year-old striker was arrested in the midlands town of Cannock on Christmas Eve night and has been bailed to appear before magistrates there.

Collymore was the country's most expensive player when he joined Liverpool from Nottingham Forest for \$17 million in 1995.

He moved from Liverpool to Villa at the start of this season with a \$14 million price tag, but has so far disappointed, scoring a paltry four goals this season.

DOCK THEIR WAGES

George Graham wants to be able to stop foreign players' wages while they are on international duty.

The Leeds manager is angry at demands placed on striker Harry Kewell by Australia. He said: "The time has come when we have to ask are foreign players guesting for their clubs?"

Last month he lost both Lucas Radebe and Kewell to tournaments involving South Africa and Australia. He added: "This situation is out of hand. Clubs must stand up and fight. If players lose thousands of pounds in wages they may think twice about wanting to play for their countries."

FJORTOFT TO STAY

Jan Fjortoft last night refused to be pushed out of Sheffield United after the club bowed to fan power and shelved the \$1.5 million sale of fellow-striker Gareth Taylor to Utrecht.

United have now encouraged

interest in Fjortoft, who is a target for Premiership strugglers Bolton.

But the Norwegian insists he wants to stay — despite feeling "humiliated" at being dropped for the last two matches.

United, third in Division One, are overloaded with strikers and want to sell in order to strengthen other areas of Nigel Spackman's promotion-chasing side.

But Fjortoft, who has 10 goals in 17 starts this season, said: "Only one person will decide my future and that's me."

"My family are happy in Sheffield and I've made certain promises to them because I've moved around a lot in my career. Also, I have a good rapport with the fans here."

But he added: "I'm very unhappy with the situation. In fact I find it humiliating because I feel I've made my case not only with my goals but in responding to signals about my fitness level."

LITTLE'S PLAYER BATTLE

Aston Villa manager Brian Little has admitted he faces an uphill battle to persuade key central defender Steve Staunton to sign a new contract.

Staunton, one of the stars of an up-and-down season for Villa, will be a free agent under the Bosman ruling when his current four-year deal expires in the summer.

The 28-year-old could command a mega deal — he is looking for a four-year contract — and Lazio have already been linked with a moneybags offer to him.

Little is keen to hang on to the services of the Republic of Ireland linchpin, who joined Villa from Liverpool six-and-a-half years ago.

But he said: "I am not sure which way things will go with Steve, but that's been the situation for the past six months."

"I would have liked to have tied things up by the new year. We've had discussions with him and he has had offers from us but he has not accepted any of them."

"It's entirely up to Steve. We have been trying everything we can to sort this situation out."

"But we have to face the fact that we are just one of a lot of clubs in this situation who have players in their first team out of contract in the summer."

Savo Milosevic believes he is free to leave at the end of this campaign and Collymore is rumoured to be unhappy at the club also (surprise, surprise).

LAMA DEMANDS NO.1

France goalkeeper Bernard Lama has criticised West Ham for not putting him straight into the first-team and he faces a clear-the-air meeting with manager Harry Redknapp.

Lama, 34, expected to play at Wimbledon after signing on loan from Paris Saint-Germain.

"I haven't come here to sit on the bench," he said. "I cannot remember the last time I was substitute."

"The reason I am here is because West Ham have a goalkeeping problem. Craig Forrest wasn't first choice at the start of the season and I don't imagine they have brought me over to understudy an understudy. I expect to get into the side soon."

West Ham signed Lama because first-choice Ludo Miklosko is out for two months following a knee operation and Forrest is their only other experienced goalkeeper.

Peter Storrie, West Ham's director of football, said: "Harry will be speaking to Lama."

Harry Redknapp however, is reluctant to drop Canadian international Craig Forrest, who has been playing well.

McCOIST FOR SUNDERLAND?

Striker Ally McCoist could be set to leave Glasgow Rangers and go on loan to English side Sunderland in a bid to make the Scottish squad for next year's World Cup Finals.

The 35-year-old forward is wanted back by the English First Division club where he spent two years in the early 1980s before joining Rangers in 1983.

McCoist is considering a three-month loan deal which could help him secure his place in Scotland's squad for the finals in France.

National team coach Craig Brown has told McCoist, who has been spent most of the season on the bench because of the prolific form of Italian Marco Negri, that he must start playing regular first team football soon.

"I would want Ally playing regularly, otherwise I cannot include him in the squad for our friendly with Denmark in March," Brown said.

"It would not be a problem if he was playing his football in the English First Division. We have chosen players before whose clubs were in that league."

There is also interest in McCoist from clubs in the United States and from Fulham, in the English Second Division,

where his former Rangers team mate Ray Wilkins, is coach.

Rangers manager Walter Smith, however, is reluctant to let McCoist move until Gordon Durie returns from suspension and Chilean striker Sebastian Rozental proves his fitness after a year's injury absence.

He named McCoist in his plans for the Glasgow derby with Celtic.



Ally McCoist: Wearside bound.

Smith said: "I have had talks with Ally and I have said when we get all our strikers back, we would look at the situation."

"If I get everyone fit, then I am not against letting him go. From his point of view, it has to be in time to let Craig Brown see him in action."

McCoist is Rangers' post-war record goalscorer and has broken almost every other record in the books during his 14 years at Ibrox.

He won the Golden Boot as Europe's top scorer in the 1991-92 season.

KERNAGHAN PAY CUT

Alan Kernaghan has taken a massive pay cut to sign for St Johnstone until the end of the season. The Perth side persuaded Manchester City to free the Northern Ireland defender after his loan spell in Scotland.



UK STORIES

Continued...

RED TAPE AT ANFIELD

Manager Roy Evans has admitted that Liverpool may be unable to hang on to new signing Brad Friedel next season.

The American goalkeeper, signed just before Christmas after months of wrangling over a work permit, must play in three quarters of Liverpool's remaining matches this season to have his permit renewed.



The club had a minimum 22 games left when Friedel joined, which means he has to play in 16 to qualify for the new permit. And if Liverpool reach both cup finals, assuming there are no replays, they will play 27 games, with the goalkeeper having to play in 20.

Friedel has already sat on the bench for the first two matches, against Coventry and Newcastle, and appearances only count if a player actually gets on to the pitch.

With David James in fine form, Liverpool are unlikely to use Friedel in either. Evans said: "The work permit is a problem, but who plays in the side must depend on the goalkeepers' form, not the permit renewal. It's very tricky for me."

If James stays in the side for two more games after the cup-ties and League matches with Wimbledon and Leicester, by January 17 Friedel will have to figure in every remaining match to qualify for a new permit.

A spokesman for the Department for Education and Employment said: "There is no question of permits for footballers being issued for anything but the one season."

STAUNTON IN THE MONEY

Steve Staunton starts 1998 destined to join the ranks of soccer millionaires.

From this week, the 28-year-old Aston Villa defender is free to talk any of the clubs from the Premiership and the Continent who are queuing up for his services — even at the cool \$10 million deal he seeks.

The Republic of Ireland international, playing the best football of his career, is determined to cash in on his opportunity of a free transfer when his current contract finishes at the end of the season.

He is looking for a \$2m signing-on fee and wages of around \$40,000 a week, and Villa manager Brian Little has conceded that the fight to keep him has now become tougher.

Little said: "We are entering a new era for football in this country and I can understand Steve wanting to test the waters to see what is happening."

"We are still talking to convince him to re-sign for us and he is aware of our feelings."

Staunton, who has a solicitor acting on his behalf, said: "Anything I have to say on the subject of my future will be in the privacy of the manager's office."

Aston Villa's tricky FA Cup assignment at Portsmouth was boosted by the availability of striker Stan Collymore and skipper Gareth Southgate, who have recovered from flu. Dwight Yorke has also resumed light training after his recent operation on a damaged ligament but is still a month from a Premiership return.

Allan Evans, Villa's assistant manager, said: "Dwight has been given the all-clear by the specialist but it is going to take him at least three weeks to get fully fit."

HUMPHREYS LEARNS LESSON

Ritchie Humphreys, the Sheffield Wednesday wonderboy who faded into obscurity after starting 1997 as one of the country's brightest prospects, conceded that he failed to heed David Pleat's warning about the dangers of burn-out.

The 20-year-old striker is on a New Year mission to rekindle his early fire after re-emerging with appearances as substitute in the last two games under Pleat's successor, Ron Atkinson.



But he bitterly regrets ignoring the advice of Pleat, who had been his mentor.

Humphreys shot into the England Under-21 side after Pleat catapulted him into the Premiership as a virtual unknown at the beginning of last season.

The youngster, tipped for the top by Dutch striker Marco Van Basten during a pre-season tour of Holland,



Dwight Yorke: On his way back.

responded with three goals in the first four games, including spectacular efforts against Aston Villa and Leicester, to become the nation's most talked-about teenager.

Now, at 20, Humphreys has become a forgotten man, overlooked by his club as well as his country for most of this season. Yet it is only six months since he represented England in the World Youth Cup in the stifling heat and

humidity of Malaysia.

That tournament, rounding off almost 12 months of non-stop football in which the youngster made 41 club appearances, took a heavy toll and his story is a warning to all young players.

Pleat, now Tottenham's Director of Football, spotted the danger signals and wanted the player to take an extensive break, even if it meant making a late start to the current campaign.

But Humphreys said: "I was afraid of missing out on the pre-season action and wanted to press my claims. I was too keen as it turned out."

"I only had about a week and a half off and I should have taken the extra time David Pleat offered me. Over-eagerness was my downfall. I don't regret going to Malaysia because it was an honour to represent my country. I can't claim that it set me back because I've simply not been playing well enough to warrant selection."

"But I was tired and dehydrated when I came back from the tournament. I lost more than a stone and didn't feel comfortable. David Pleat was right that I needed more time to recover."

PHILLIPS' TARGET

Sunderland's Kevin Phillips, who once cleaned the boots of Alan Shearer at Southampton, now aims to step into them.

The 24-year-old striker has his eyes on the north-east goal crown that Shearer will not wear this season because of injury. Phillips has scored 11 goals, including four in as many games.

He said: "I'd love to take over from him as the region's No.1. We grew up together at Southampton and I knew he was destined to be a bit special."

"If I can achieve half as much as Alan in the game I will be more than happy."

Phillips knows he might hold the title for just one year before Shearer returns but it would be the perfect

help."

Eleven-goal Phillips is locked in an intriguing three-way battle with Middlesbrough's Mikkel Beck and Paul Merson for the region's Golden Boot.

Sunderland manager Peter Reid, who snapped Phillips up from Watford last summer for just \$600,000, said: "Kevin's certainly got a knack for scoring goals and that's a priceless quality nowadays."

HEARTS FURY

Hearts manager Jim Jefferies blasted his side for throwing away a 2-0 lead in the drawn Edinburgh derby.

The Tynecastle outfit moved into a 2-0 lead against Hibernian thanks to a Steve Fulton brace within the first 10 minutes of the first-half.

But while Jefferies told his team to be wary of a backlash from Jim Duffy's men at the interval, the advice was ignored and the visitors salvaged a point through goals from Andy Walker and Pat McGinlay.



Alan Shearer: Boots once cleaned by Phillips.

The result cost Hearts the opportunity to displace Rangers, who faced Celtic at Parkhead on Friday, at the top of the Premier Division.

Jefferies said: "I consider that two points dropped as we were cruising at half-time and could easily have led by more."

"I felt we could have done better than just the two goals and knew if it had gone to three it might even have been a rout."

"But Chris Reid made several fine saves in the Hibernian goal and I knew if they got a goal back soon after the re-start we would be under pressure."

"I told the players their tails would be up if that happened, but nobody claimed the cross for the first goal, nobody even jumped, and Andy Walker scored. That gave Hibernian a lift and they deserved to pull it back, though we had the better chances to have won it at the end."

O'NEILL DEAL COLLAPSES

Aberdeen's attempts to secure Coventry midfielder Michael O'Neill on a three-month loan deal have collapsed after a row over any future transfer fee.

The Northern Ireland international was due to travel up to the Granite City last night to link up with former Highfield Road

assistant boss Alex Miller.

But negotiations broke down when Coventry reportedly demanded a guaranteed fee in the region of \$400,000 should the move become permanent — which the Dons were unwilling to provide.

Aberdeen manager Miller said: "We tried to get the player on loan but it hasn't worked out."

"We had hoped something could be done to get the deal agreed, but it just didn't happen."

"He has gone back to Coventry and there is no chance of things being resurrected."



SMITH EASING DOWN

Rangers midfielder Stuart McCall believes impending retirement has calmed once fiery manager Walter Smith's approach to Old Firm derbies.

Smith steps down at the end of



the season and though his desire to guide his side to a tenth successive title is strong, he is a more relaxed figure.

McCall has worked under Smith for long enough to sense a change in mood from his boss during the Glasgow derbies to date in this campaign.

"During the last two Old Firm games this season I think he has been calmer and much more relaxed about the fixture than in previous years," said McCall.

"If you saw him last year when he was running up and down the touchline he was like a crazed lunatic, but now that has changed."

"We have sometimes failed to lift ourselves against lesser teams but still managed to rise to the big occasion."

Scotland international McCall's versatility has been put to the test this season with extra defensive duty part of Smith's demands, but he is flexible.

McCall added: "I am happy to play anywhere as long as I am involved, but being in the middle of the park is where the action is."

COCA COLA CUP TIES

Newcastle United - Liverpool
West Ham United - Arsenal
Ipswich Town - Chelsea
Reading - Middlesbrough
Ties to be played January 6/7



TIME GENTLEMEN PLEASE

Arsene Wenger has won his biggest battle at Highbury — by putting the country's most notorious squad of boozers on the wagon.

The Arsenal manager has succeeded in cleaning up the club they said could never be reformed from their infamous late-night escapades.

This was revealed yesterday by players themselves who laughed off suggestions that they turn up for training with their breath smelling of alcohol.

One Arsenal first-teamer said: "Nobody at this club is out of control. The manager keeps a careful watch on alcohol consumption. We have been told that too much alcohol affects the muscles and that the only time a player should drink is after a match."



Dennis Bergkamp: Hates players who lead the 'wild life'.

With this response from the players, Wenger could afford to dismiss allegations, attributed to star Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp, that some of his team-mates drink too much. Bergkamp may still be asked to explain remarks in a Dutch magazine, which are thought to relate to events at Highbury at least two years ago.

Alcohol is now banned in the players' bar: only soft drinks and water are available.

Bergkamp is reported as saying: "In England, some players booze a lot. Those who have been out on the town and smell of booze the next morning are the ones I set out after."

"I chase them during training and won't leave them alone. I'm at them from the first minute to the last. I can't stand players who perform below standard because they choose to lead a wild life."

In 1995, Paul Merson went public about his drink problems, followed a year later by Tony Adams, who in 1990 was in prison for drink related offences. Both sought treatment from Alcoholics Anonymous.

Midfielder Ray Parlour embarrassed the club with revelations about his drinking but has also mended his ways.

Wenger admits he has heard stories circulating about Adams arriving at the ground smelling of drink but dismisses them as mischievous speculation.



SOUTH AMERICA

— Compiled by MARIO ETCHART —



1997 IN REVIEW: THE WINNERS AND STARS IN SOUTH AMERICA

SOUTH AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Argentina: River Plate (First and Second Phase)
Brazil: Vasco da Gama
Chile: Colo Colo (Second Phase) and Universidad Catolica (First Phase)
Uruguay: Nacional (First Phase), Defensor Sporting (Second Phase).
Overall champion: Penarol
Colombia: America of Cali
Paraguay: Olimpia
Bolivia: Bolivar
Peru: Alianza Lima
Venezuela: Atletico Zulia
Ecuador: Deportivo Quito or Barcelona (one round to go)

SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS (AT CLUB LEVEL)

LIBERTADORES CUP
Champion: Cruzeiro of Brazil
Runner-up: Sporting Cristal of Peru

SUPERCUP

Champion: River Plate of Argentina
Runner-up: Sao Paulo of Brazil

CONMEBOL CUP

Champion: Atletico Mineiro of Brazil
Runner-up: Lanus of Argentina

CUP'S CUP

Champion: Velez Sarsfield of Argentina
Runner-up: River Plate of Argentina

Most outstanding coach: Ramon Diaz (River Plate)

Most outstanding player:

Marcelo Salas (River Plate and Chile)

SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS (AT NATIONAL LEVEL)

COPA AMERICA

Winner: Argentina
Runner-up: Colombia

Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay and Chile qualified for the 1998 World Cup.

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

U/20

Champion: Argentina
Runner-up: Uruguay

U/17

Champion: Brazil
Runner-up: Ghana

Best coaches senior level:

Daniel Passarella (Argentina) and Paulo Cesar Carpegiani (Paraguay).

Best players senior level:

Marcelo Salas (Chile), Roberto Acuna (Paraguay), Carlos Valderrama (Colombia), Ariel Ortega (Argentina).

Best coaches youth level:

Jose Pekerman (Argentina) and Victor Pua (Uruguay).

Best players youth level:

Nicolas Olivera and Marcelo Zalayeta (Uruguay), Pablo Aimar and Juan Roman Riquelme (Argentina).

MOST OUTSTANDING CLUBS IN SOUTH AMERICA IN '97

PENAROL & RIVER PLATE

PENAROL

Penarol of Uruguay, the oldest and most popular club in the country, made history by winning for the second time in its history five consecutive Uruguayan league championships. The first one was between the years 1958 and 1962, and the second one between 1993 and



1997.

Penarol is the only Uruguayan country to win five Libertadores Cup championships (1960, 1961, 1966, 1982, 1987) plus three World Club championships (1961, 1966, 1982).

Penarol was coached by Gegorio Perez in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1997 and by Jorge Fossati, currently with Cerro Porteno of Paraguay, in 1996.

Their most outstanding players are: Uruguayan international midfielder Pablo Bengoechea, member of the Uruguayan champion since 1993, Uruguayan U/20 international striker Marcelo Zalayeta, and forwards Antonio Pacheco and Luis Romero.

RIVER PLATE

River Plate of Argentina won the Argentine league for the third consecutive time and added to its brilliant year the South American



Supercup for the first time in its history.

The "Millionaires" of Argentine football won the Libertadores Cup in 1986 and 1996, and the Toyota Cup in 1986.

River was coached by former Argentine international striker Ramon

Diaz.

The most outstanding players: Uruguayan captain Enzo Francescoli, Chilean international striker Marcelo Salas, and Argentine international midfielder Marcelo Gallardo.

Another player who had a major contribution in River Plate's success was Argentine international striker Ariel Ortega, now with Spanish club Valencia.

MARCELO SALAS: MAN OF THE MOMENT

Chilean international striker Marcelo Salas, one of the stars of Argentine champion River Plate was distinguished as the 'Sportsman of the Year 1997' in Chile while in Argentina he was awarded with the 'Silver Olimpia' given to the best player for the 1997 season.

In Chile the Sports



Marcelo Salas: Sportsman of the Year 1997

Journalist Association named Salas as the "Sportsman of the Year", ahead of motorcyclist Carlos de Gavardo and tennis player Marcelo Rios.

In Argentina, Salas beat Argentine U/20 youth international Juan Roman Riquelme, who plays for Boca Juniors, and Argentine international midfielder Marcelo Gallardo, who also plays for River Plate.

Salas was the second highest scorer of the South American 1998 World Cup qualifying rounds and helped Chile to qualify to a World Cup for the first time in 15 years.

The brilliant Chilean forward, the highest paid footballer in Argentina, is wanted by several European clubs, among them Manchester United of England and Italian Serie A club Parma. But the prolific scorer could continue his career with River Plate for one more season.

Parma's president, Calisto Tanzi, is in Buenos Aires with the intention of buying

the Chilean striker. He is not worried by the A\$40 million asked by River Plate. According to Tanzi, Parma will sell Argentine international striker Hernan Crespo to German champion Borussia Dortmund for A\$20 million, money that could be used to pay part of Salas' transfer fee.

COACHING MERRY GO ROUND

Boca Juniors, the club who have been desperately in search of an Argentine league title since 1991, confirmed unofficially its current coach, Hector Veira, for the 1998 season. But, according to journalistic sources from Buenos Aires, his position at the helm of the most popular club in the country is not certain.

The names of Daniel Passarella, Carlos Bianchi, Jorge Valdano, Jose Pekerman, Miguel Russo and Miguel Brindisi are still in the race to replace Veira in one of the most demanding jobs in Argentine football.

Meanwhile Cesar Luis Menotti, who resigned from Italian club Sampdoria some months ago, has been confirmed as coach of Independiente, and Jorge Valdano has been linked with San Lorenzo.

Finally, Alfio Basile has been linked with both Boca Juniors and San Lorenzo's coaching jobs.

PREVIEW: LIBERTADORES CUP '98

The 38th Libertadores Cup, the major championship at club level in South America, will kick off in February with the participation of 20 teams, among them some old campaigners and three newcomers.

URUGUAY:

Uruguayan champion Penarol return after winning the Libertadores Cup five times (1960, 1961, 1966, 1982 and 1987), while the other Uruguayan representative, Nacional, won it in 1971, 1980 and 1988.

ARGENTINA:

Argentine champion River Plate, recently crowned as the 1997 South American Supercup champion, won the Libertadores Cup in 1986 and 1996 while compatriot Colon of Santa Fe will make its debut in the championship.

BRAZIL:

Defending champion Cruzeiro, will start their campaign in the second round. Cruzeiro defeated former Peruvian champion Sporting Cristal in the final of the 1997 edition (0-0 away in Lima, and 1-0 at home in Belo Horizonte). They will take part

with two times Libertadores Cup winner Gremio of Porto Alegre (1983 and 1995), and Brazilian national champion Vasco da Gama.

CHILE:

Chile will be represented by two prestigious clubs: Colo Colo, who won the tournament in 1991, and the aristocratic Universidad Catolica.

COLOMBIA:

The Colombian clubs will be four times runners-up America of Cali and newcomer Bucaramanga America, the unlucky team of

Colombia, never having won the tournament, losing in four finals against River Plate of Argentina (twice), Penarol of Uruguay and Argentinos Juniors of Argentina.

PARAGUAY:

Paraguay will be represented by Cerro Porteno, the most popular club in the country, and arch-rival Olimpia, winner of two Libertadores Cup (1979 and 1990).

PERU:

Peru will participate with Alianza Lima and Sporting Cristal, who were runner-up in

1997.

VENEZUELA:

Venezuela will be represented by Caracas and Atletico Zulia, another newcomer in the

championship.

And finally, the most probable Ecuadorean representatives will be Deportivo Quito and Barcelona.

WHO THE BOOKIES LIKE FOR LIBERTADORES '98 ...

River Plate (Argentina)	3-1	Alianza Lima (Peru)	9-1
Cruzeiro (Brazil)	3-1	Cerro Porteno (Paraguay)	11-1
Gremio (Brazil)	4-1	Sporting Cristal (Peru)	11-1
Vasco da Gama (Brazil)	4-1	Colon (Argentina)	20-1
Penarol (Uruguay)	6-1	Bucaramanga (Colombia)	25-1
America (Colombia)	6-1	Bolivar (Bolivia)	25-1
Olimpia (Paraguay)	6-1	Oriente Petrolero (Bolivia)	40-1
Colo Colo (Chile)	7-1	Caracas (Venezuela)	75-1
Universidad Catolica (Chile)	8-1	Atletico Zulia	100-1
Nacional (Uruguay)	8-1		



WORLD STOP PRESS

FINNEY BECOMES KNIGHT

Tom Finney has become British football's latest knight.

The former England international heads the sports names receiving awards in the country's New Year's Honours List published last week.

Finney, 75, follows in the footsteps of such as Sir Stanley Matthews, Sir Bobby Charlton and Sir Alf Ramsey.

There is also the lesser honour of Member of the British Empire for Wales and Chelsea striker Mark Hughes, Scotland goalkeeper Jim Leighton and Crewe manager Dario Gradi.

Sir Tom, known as the 'Preston Plumber' played for Preston for 22 years and made 76 appearances for England, scoring 30 goals.

ANTI-HOOLIGAN LAWS BEGIN

Tough new measures to combat hooliganism in Argentine football came into force last Wednesday after President Carlos Menem signed a decree making it law.

The measures, which include close circuit cameras inside the grounds and a database on known hooligans or 'barrabravas' as they are known in Argentina, have been introduced after four deaths in the last six months.

The authorities finally reacted to growing pressure after a fan was shot dead following the Huracan-San Lorenzo match a fortnight ago.



Julio Grondona, President of the Argentine Football Federation, said he was satisfied with the law.

"I am more interested in the fight against hooliganism than winning the 1998 World Cup," he said.

RODRIGO TO REAL IN 1999

Brazilian striker Rodrigo, who currently plays with Portuguesa of Sao Paulo, has agreed to play for Spanish powerhouse Real Madrid from 1999, his agent Fernando Cesar de Sousa has announced.

De Sousa said Rodrigo would sign a six-year contract with Real and that agreement had been reached between the two clubs on the deal.

The news came as a blow to Real's Spanish rivals Deportivo La Coruna, who had been negotiating to sign Rodrigo.



Mark Hughes: MBE

COACHING JOB UP FOR GRABS

Former national star Jomo Sono looks set to succeed Clive Barker as coach of World Cup qualifiers South Africa.

Barker resigned this month after the African champions' dismal showing at the Confederations Cup in Saudi Arabia, where they finished bottom of Group B behind Uruguay, the Czech Republic and the United Arab Emirates.

Sono, 42, owns and coaches Jomo Cosmos, an unfashionable Premier League club whose greatest achievement was reaching the 1993 African Cup-winners Cup semi-finals.

Another local contender for the 10,000-dollars-a-month post expected to be filled Saturday is Gordon Igesund, who guided Manning Rangers from the port city of Durban to first place in the 1997-1998 national championship.

Shakes Mashaba and Trott Moloto, the national youth and junior coaches, were also short listed by the South African Football Association, but have received little media support.

Dutch pair Jo Bonfrere and Clemens Westerhof, Frenchman Philippe Troussier, Englishman Terry Venables and Russian Victor Bondarenko are also under consideration.

When Barker quit on December 20, national association officials hinted at a foreign replacement, with high-profile Venables and former Nigerian coach Bonfrere the front runners.

This triggered an outcry from local coaches who claimed foreigners would destroy the natural style of South Africans and were interested only in money.

Since returning to international football in 1992 following decades of apartheid-induced isolation, locals 'Screamer' Tshabalala, Barker and Peruvian Augusto Palacios have coached the national team.

South Africa face Namibia in the regional championship on January 24, defend the African Nations Cup in Burkina Faso two-weeks later and meet hosts France, Denmark and Saudi Arabia in the World Cup from June 12.

WINTER FRACTURES CHEEKBONE



Dutch international midfielder Aron Winter is expected to be out of action for several weeks after suffering a fractured cheekbone in a friendly match.

Winter was injured during Inter Milan's 3-0 win over French club Auxerre in a friendly match and had to be hospitalised.

PALINHA TO GO HOME

Brazilian forward Palinha is to be transferred from Spanish First Division club Mallorca to Brazilian team Flamengo for a fee of \$3.4 million, Spanish sports newspapers have reported.

Mallorca will replace Palinha by signing Argentine striker Ariel Lopez.



Tom Finney: Arise Sir Tom.

BIRMINGHAM CHASE McCOIST

English First Division club Birmingham City have joined the race to sign Scottish World Cup star Ally McCoist on loan.

Second Division Fulham, First Division Sunderland and Premier League Newcastle also have indicated interest in McCoist.

"In the last two or three days there's been speculation about Ally McCoist going," said Birmingham manager Trevor Francis. "So I rang Walter Smith at Glasgow Rangers just to see exactly what the situation is."

"He's made my interest known to Ally McCoist but there are a number of clubs who are very interested in taking Ally."

McCoist is expected to go out on loan for three months in the New Year after losing his first-team place with the Scottish champions this season.

The 35-year-old striker is anxious to get a

run of games under his belt and retain his place in Scotland's World Cup squad.

A loan move to another Premier Division club in Scotland is not permitted under Scottish League rules and England looks his best option.

McCoist has been at Rangers for 14 years, scoring 348 goals in 568 games.

REUTER SUSPENDED

Borussia Dortmund captain Stefan Reuter has been suspended for the first leg of the UEFA Super Cup Final against Barcelona, at the Nou Camp Stadium, after receiving a second yellow card against Sparta Praha.

In a statement the European Football Union (UEFA) said Barcelona midfielder Roger Garcia would also miss the match after a second booking this season against PSV Eindhoven.

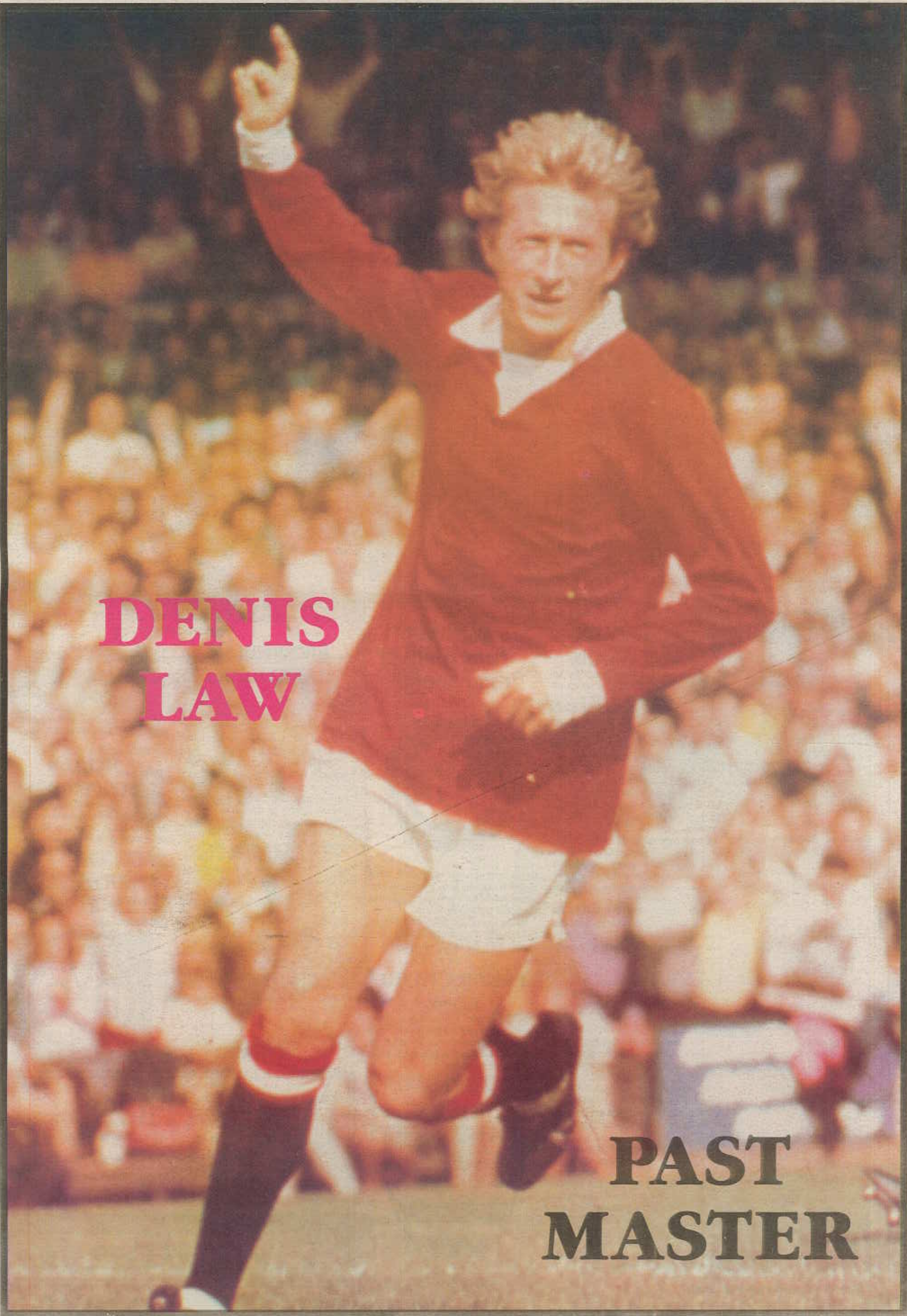


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